

A 10YR DESTINATION PLAN FOR LINCOLN COUNTY



TRAVEL NEVADA - LINCOLN COUNTY AUTHORITY OF TOURISM - BETTER DESTINATIONS - NICHOLS TOURISM GROUP - SMG CONSULTING

CREATED THROUGH THE TRAVEL NEVADA DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT DEMONSTRATION (3D) PROJECT AUGUST 2023



INTRODUCTION

Lincoln County

CONTENTS

- 4 About Lincoln County
- 5 The Purpose of This Plan
 - About the 3D Project
- 6 How This Plan Was Built
 - The Lincoln 3D Steering Committee

KEY FINDINGS & INSIGHTS

- 8 Travel Nevada Research
- 9 3D Tourism Development Study
- 10 Public Workshop Findings
- 11 The SWOT
- 12 Scenario Modeling

THE DESTINATION PLAN

- 14 **The 10-Year Vision**
 - How This Vision Aligns with the Travel Nevada Brand
- 16 **The Goal of this Plan**
 - How This Goal Will Be Achieved
- 17 **The Target Visitor**
 - Why This Visitor Is Right for Lincoln County
 - High-Potential Personas
- 18 **Development Objectives**
- 20 Objective 1: Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- 22 Objective 2: Develop Visitor Infrastructure
- 24 Objective 3: Develop Organizational Strength
- 25 Objective 4: Develop Promotional Strength
- 27 **Implementation Timeline**
- 28 Lay the Foundation 1-2 Years
- 29 Gather Momentum 3-5 Years
- 29 Move Toward Success 6-10 Years
- 30 Ongoing Initiatives

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN

- 32 Roles and Responsibilities
- 33 Funding Opportunities
- 34 Overcoming Barriers to Implementation
- 35 Communications Strategies and Themes
- 37 Measures of Success

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES

- 39 Original 3D Concept
- 39 Stakeholder Map
- 39 Destination Asset Inventory
- 39 3D Visitor Perception Study
- 39 Custom Zartico Report

LINCOLN COUNTY INTRODUCTION



ABOUT LINCOLN COUNTY

Encompassing approximately 10,600 square miles, Lincoln County's scale positions it as the seventh largest county in the nation. Yet the 2020 census shows a population of only 4,500, making it Nevada's fourth least-populous county. Its southern portions are located only about 50 miles from central Las Vegas, making it easily accessible for both Las Vegas residents and visitors. U.S. 93, which stretches from near Mexico to Canada, passes from the county's southern border to its northern reaches and is its main travel route.

Visitors have come to Lincoln County for years, attracted primarily by its range of outdoor experiences and unique natural environments. Visitor spending was relatively flat between 2015 and 2020, but jumped in 2021 as Nevada residents pursued trips closer to home during the pandemic. Even with that increased visitation, Lincoln County had one of the lowest visitor spends per resident of any Nevada county. This is mainly because Lincoln's vast spaces offer few paid accommodations, restaurants, shops, and other ways for travelers to spend money. Many visitors camp on public land, paying no lodging taxes, or come for the day to use the extensive trail system, bringing much of what they need with them.

Although Lincoln County's visitor spending and lodging tax collections are low, it has strong potential as a tourism destination. Its five state parks, the Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge, 250 miles of motorized trails, and deep dark skies provide a diverse mix of exceptional outdoor experiences for hikers, horseback riders, bikers, and OHV enthusiasts. The county's unique natural and cultural assets have been enhanced by more than 70 projects with funding from the

Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) of 1998. These include a \$2 million project to improve backcountry access and a \$1.3 million grant for a linear rail park in Caliente. And now Caliente has been proposed as a stop on a new Amtrak line connecting Las Vegas with Salt Lake City.

Lincoln County also offers much for the cultural traveler. Caliente's rich rail history, the Old West heritage of Pioche, and the Mormon settlement of Panaca offer a very different Nevada experience than most visitors expect. The art world is agog over Michael Heizer's City, a 1.5-mile art installation that accommodates just six visitors a day in isolated surroundings. The county is even more famous for another remote place — Area 51 and the stretch of U.S. 93 called the Extraterrestrial Highway, which runs near the off-limits U.S. military site.

The county's tourism promotion is managed by the Lincoln County Authority of Tourism (LCAT). In 2022, LCAT was allocated \$21,652 from the city of Caliente's lodging tax collections, about 21% of the total, but had no county funding support. In 2023, the city also allocated an additional \$700 a month to support what had been an all-volunteer effort.

In 2023, the county's Regional Development Authority, the County Commission, and the City of Caliente all endorsed a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, calling for the county to quadruple its visitation and double visitor spending by 2030. With a focused plan for the future and ongoing access to SNPLMA funding, Lincoln County has boundless opportunities to build tourism as a more integral part of its economic base.



THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Travel Nevada created the 3D Project, its statewide destination development initiative, in spring of 2022 to reimagine rural Nevada’s attraction for travelers in new and exciting ways and lay a foundation for incorporating destination development into its mission.

This 10-Year Destination Plan is intended to guide Lincoln County and LCAT — as well as its industry, community, civic, and public land partners — in shaping the county’s tourism and recreation economy to yield even stronger returns for the county, its communities, and the State of Nevada. The aim of this plan is to grow visitation by a factor of four and double the amount of visitor spending by 2030, thus generating more business earnings, jobs, and tax revenues through creation of new products and experiences that also improve the quality of life for Lincoln County residents.



3D PROJECT TIMELINE

MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	MONTH 4	MONTH 5	MONTH 6	MONTH 7	MONTH 8
Stakeholder Mapping		Site Visit		Scenario Analysis		Site Visit	
Destination Asset Inventory				Destination Vision		Strategy Development	
	Steering Committee Kickoff		SWOT Analysis		Economic Goal		Deliver Final Report
	Research Review		Gap Analysis		Target Audiences		
			Research Analysis				

ABOUT THE 3D PROJECT

Lincoln County was among six projects selected by Travel Nevada and approved by the Nevada Commission on Tourism to demonstrate the potential of a state-funded destination development program. Each of the six 3D destinations was given access to a team of tourism planning professionals to guide creation of 10-year Destination Plans. The plans identify high-potential opportunities for new travel-worthy experiences and products, desirable visitor infrastructure, and advancing organizational and promotional strength.

Lincoln County — along with White Pine County and Friends of Black Rock High Rock — was among the 3D projects participating in the initial planning phase from January to August 2023. The remaining three participants — Boulder City, the Carson Cultural Corridor, and Nevada’s Indian Territory — are set to complete plans by April 2024. The project closes with a final report of findings and recommendations for Travel Nevada.

Once their plans are complete, participants have a chance to seek funding from a \$2 million EDA grant, secured by Travel Nevada to bring the 3D plans to life. Travel Nevada also structured the demonstration project to include participation from a multidisciplinary 3D Working Group, which includes several state and federal agencies that share the Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs’ mission of building rural economies.

HOW THE PLAN WAS BUILT

Lincoln County's 3D Project Consulting Team — led by Nichols Tourism Group, with Better Destinations as co-lead — worked closely with LCAT Executive Director Marcia Hurd and Travel Nevada Destination Development Manager Cortney Bloomer to manage the planning process.

A first step for Marcia Hurd was to use a 3D planning tool to map various stakeholders' potential level of engagement in the planning process, based on their ability to influence and implement the plan. Several key players identified as "Activators" — with a high ability to both influence and act on planning outcomes — were recruited to serve on Lincoln County's 12-member 3D Steering Committee to share oversight and input for the plan. Marcia Hurd also led the use of another planning tool — the 3D Asset Inventory — to identify the county's existing tourism resources.

Through four virtual steering committee meetings and two site visits, the consulting team guided the county through a SWOT analysis, a gap analysis and scenario testing to develop insights for the plan. The site visits in March and July 2023 also included community forums at the Sidetrack Restaurant, generating further ideas and feedback from about 50 attendees, including residents and business owners.

Travel Nevada's research program provided rich insights into economic impacts of tourism in Lincoln County. The office also supplied a customized Zartico report analyzing the behaviors and spending of Nevada travelers during their time in the county. Further insights were developed from the 3D Tourism Development Study fielded by the 3D consulting team to Travel Nevada's first-party database, yielding more than 5,700 responses.

3D STEERING COMMITTEE

Our Team

MEMBERS

Denise Brown, *Grants Administration, Lincoln County*

Melissa Clary, *Pioche Chamber & Gem Theater*

Jeff Fontaine, *Executive Director,
Lincoln County Regional Development Authority*

Sheryl Johnson, *Realtor*

Jeff Johnson, *Silver State UTV Rentals*

Ethan Mower, *Park Supervisor, Kershaw-Ryan State Park*

Christine Prescott, *Caliente Area Mountain Biking
Association (CAMBA)*

Mike Reese, *County Commissioner, Lincoln County*

Craig Roisum, *City Manager, City of Caliente*

Steve Rowe, *Mayor, City of Caliente*

Ben Rowley, *Lincoln County Coalition*

Cody Tingey, *Regional Manager, Nevada State Parks*

3D PROJECT LEAD

Marcia Hurd, *Executive Director, Lincoln County
Authority of Tourism*



LINCOLN COUNTY

KEY FINDINGS & INSIGHTS



KEY FINDINGS

TRAVEL NEVADA RESEARCH

- Lincoln County's total visitor spending grew 1.0% per year on average between 2014 and 2019, according to Travel Nevada's Tourism Economics. From 2021 through 2022, the county's visitor spending grew by 22.3% on average.
- Pandemic-related shutdowns halved Nevada's visitation in 2020. Visitor spending plunged by 50.9%, and remained short of 2019 levels until 2022. A different story emerged in Lincoln County, where visitor spending dipped just 3.7% in 2020 and hit an all-time high of \$8.6 million in 2022. The county reaped benefits from staying open to travelers, as well as a nationwide surge of interest in the outdoors and smaller towns.
- While Lincoln County saw two back-to-back record-breaking years, that \$8.6 million in 2022 visitor spending was the fourth lowest recorded by any Nevada county that year, ahead of only Mineral, Eureka, and Esmeralda counties.
- Travel Nevada's customized Zartico report of Lincoln County in 2022 reinforces three key points: The county's connectivity to Las Vegas is significant, both for in-state and out-of-state visitation; too many experience the county for a day visit or while passing through; and the scarcity of lodgings, restaurants, retail,

and paid attractions gives visitors few ways to spend money, meaning tourism is generating far less economic impact than it could.

- These expanding spending trends continued in 2022 with visitor spending reaching \$8.6 million, an increase of 26 percent above 2021 levels.
- Zartico research showed 73% of Lincoln County visitors were from out of state, a level similar to other Nevada counties (excluding Clark, Washoe, and Douglas counties.) More than 80% of mobile devices observed in Lincoln County also were seen in Las Vegas and Clark County, and 68% of Lincoln County's in-state visitors came from Clark County.
- The lack of overnight visitation is clear. Zartico found only 9% of Lincoln County visitors were observed at a hotel, well below the statewide average of 36% (excluding Clark, Washoe, and Douglas counties).
- The pass-through nature of many visitors also is reflected in Lincoln's visitor spending. The average cardholder spend in Lincoln County was only \$93, compared with the statewide average of \$229 (excluding Clark, Washoe, and Douglas counties.) The vast majority of that spending — 79% — went toward fuel purchases, about 2.5 times the state average of 32% (excluding Clark, Washoe, and Douglas counties.)

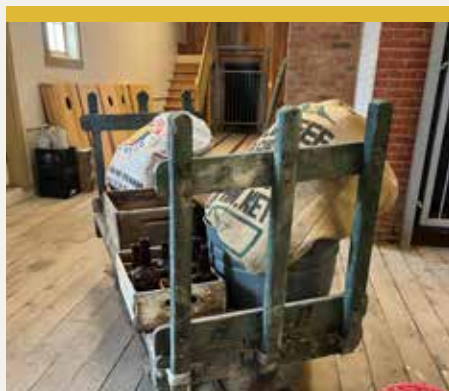


KEY FINDINGS

3D TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STUDY

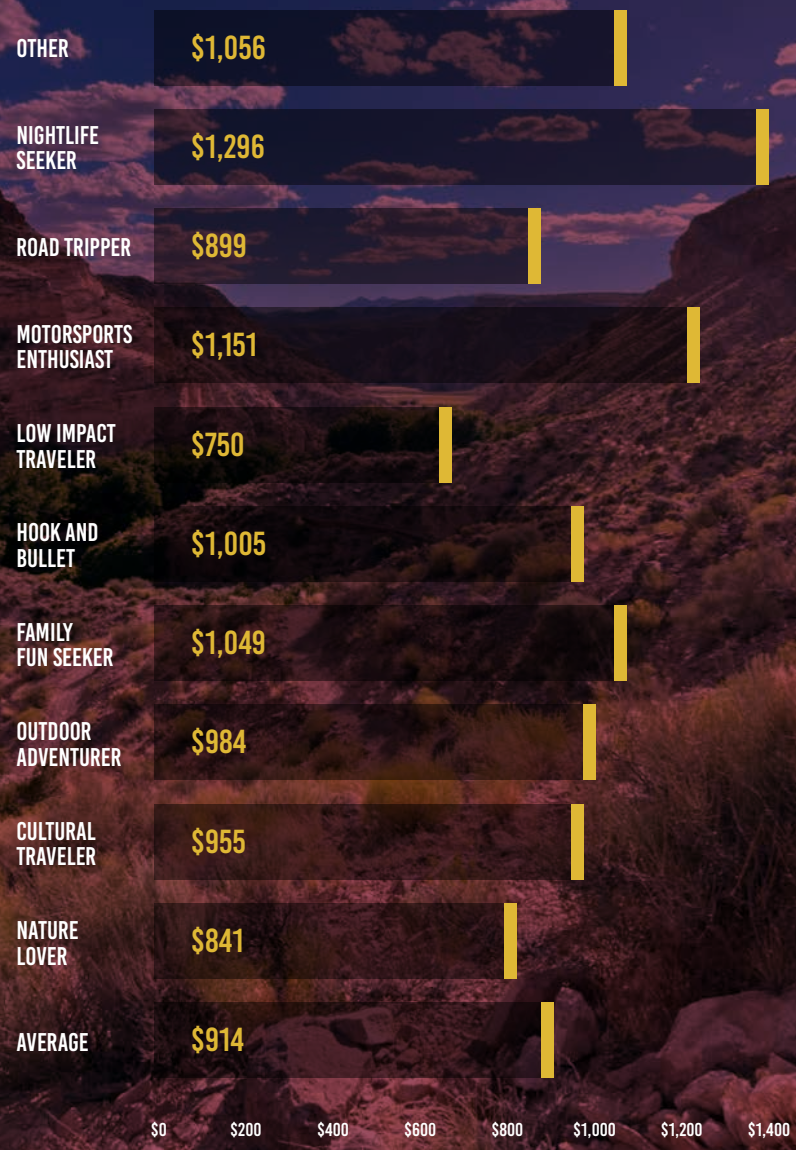
Travel Nevada fielded a survey created for the 3D Project to its first-party database of about 75,000 emails. The office also stimulated response through organic and paid social and digital messaging. With 5,739 responses, the findings have a confidence level of 95% at +/- 2.5%.

- About 75% of respondents reported traveling in Nevada since 2020, with Las Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe the most frequently mentioned destinations. About 35% said they had visited a lesser-known destination.
- Respondents expressed significant interest in visiting all six of the 3D pilot destinations. When presented with the Lincoln County concept, 70% said they would be likely to visit, giving Lincoln the second-highest rating of the six concepts.
- The study showed about 75% of respondents were interested in overnighting outside of Las Vegas or Reno-Tahoe if the destination offered activities or experiences they enjoyed.
- Respondents were most motivated to choose a destination because “it’s a beautiful place” (77.3%), “it offers a unique experience I’ve never had before” (64.4%), and “I like to travel to smaller, more remote places” (54.5%).
- Large numbers of respondents described themselves as Road Trippers (72%), Nature Lovers (64%) or Cultural Travelers (54%). All six 3D destinations have strong potential to attract all of these traveler segments.
- Traveler personas reporting the highest spending per trip were Nightlife Seekers (\$1,296), Motorsports Enthusiasts (\$1,151), Family Fun Seekers (\$1,049), and Hook-and-Bullet Enthusiasts (\$1,005).
- Given a choice of lodging types, nearly half (48.8%) said the chance to stay in a historic lodging or resort would inspire them to travel. Nearly a quarter said they’d travel for a unique overnight experience, such as stargazing or a festival. About the same share said they’d travel for unusual lodgings such as Airstream trailers, yurts, or A-frames.
- More than half – across all age and income categories — said a destination’s sustainability practices were at least somewhat important to their choice of destinations.



Source: 3D Tourism Development Study

Per Trip Spending by Visitor Persona

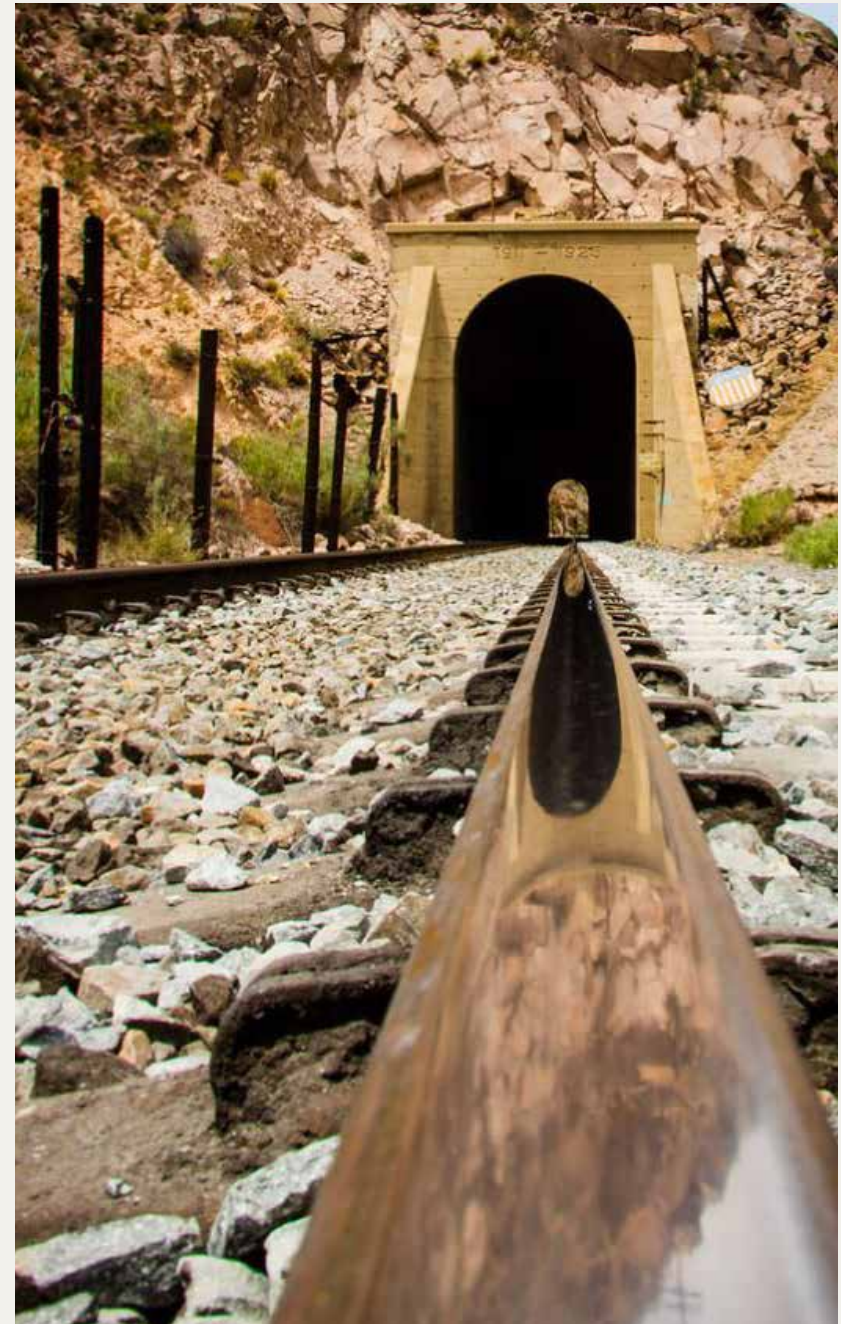


INSIGHTS

COMMUNITY FORUMS

Site visits in March and July each included a public community forum at the Sidetrack Restaurant. Each time, about 20 to 30 participants were offered dinner and a chance to weigh in. Attendees expressed the following views:

- There is a need to showcase our products and experiences more extensively. Lincoln County needs more itineraries for both overnight and day visitors.
- Our hotels are struggling. Many average only about a 55% occupancy level. They need help in marketing and promotion to build demand.
- More and better wayfinding is essential. We have a large county, and visitor experiences are spread out.
- There are exciting new opportunities – the renovated Caliente Rail Depot, a potential Amtrak stop on a new route between Las Vegas and Salt Lake City (although even if approved and funded, it could be years before it's operational), potential use of an expanded 4-H Camp in Alamo, and a pending \$1 million renovation of the Gem Theater in Pioche.
- To make the most of the Depot renovation, we need to develop nearby retail, transportation, and other amenities.
- The new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Lincoln County lays out an aggressive goal for tourism to play an increasingly important role in the county's economy.
- There are too many shuttered buildings, particularly in Pioche. The Main Street Program could be an important partner in making them more vibrant.
- We need more ways for visitors to spend money while they are here. Too many campers enjoy our parks and outdoors, but bring everything they need with them from home. We need to think innovatively – pop-up shops, incubator short-term leases, etc. Expanded retail and food and beverage options also would be important for residents' quality of life.
- Our hunters and anglers are important visitors. Hunters come in the fall, and fishers come year-round.
- Mountain bikers and OHV users are also key visitor segments. How do we get them to spend more while in the county?
- Who will manage and direct this new plan? As a volunteer organization, LCAT will be very challenged to actively manage it. New resources are needed. Our access to volunteers continues to dwindle.
- The Mormon settlement story is a key heritage story for Lincoln County. We don't really showcase that.
- We need help in spurring entrepreneurial thinking. Operators of a new OHV rental business say they need help marketing their business to visitors to be successful.



SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis identifies both internal factors — Strengths and Weaknesses — as well as external factors — Opportunities and Threats — that can either advance the work of an organization or hold it back. Lincoln County's SWOT Analysis was developed through primary and secondary research, input from the 3D Steering Committee, and the community forums.

Strengths include the county's diverse range of attractions, its concentration of five state parks, new rail opportunities emerging in Caliente, enhancements planned in Pioche, SNPLMA grants for expanding and enhancing Lincoln's outdoor and cultural experiences, and the county's close proximity to Las Vegas with opportunities to attract more of the city's visitors and residents.

A major issue for Lincoln County tourism is that its diverse and compelling attractions are dispersed across a large area. It has limited options for overnight accommodations, retail, and food and beverage. An abundance of vacant storefronts saps vitality from its main streets. Many potentially compelling attractions — relating to the county's railroad history, Mormon influence, Western heritage, dark skies, or even its unique extraterrestrial lore — are hard for visitors

to know about, appreciate, or understand. Even more opportunity is lost as there is little integration among Lincoln County's major attractions, thus cross-selling is not maximized. The lack of a full-time destination organization and LCAT's volunteer nature also hold the county back from realizing its full potential as a tourism destination.

Moving to opportunities, Lincoln County can find strong potential to advance its tourism economy in future rounds of SNPLMA funding. Developing strategies to attract more visitors and residents from Las Vegas also could be highly productive. Landing a stop on a new Amtrak route could open the county to far more domestic and international visitors, while increasing residents' access to vital services. The county's business community could benefit greatly from a full-time destination organization equipped to lead marketing and collaborations within the county and with adjoining counties and to make the most of Travel Nevada's opportunities for partners.

A key threat is for the county to miss out on this potential by remaining a "drive-through destination" or by overlooking potential resources to build its economy. Another caution for consideration is the importance of caring for the county's many natural assets, which could degrade if not properly managed.

The Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Diverse mix of attractions/themes
- Concentration of State Parks
- Enhancements to Depot
- SNPLMA funding
- Enhancements to Gem and Firehouse
- Significant traffic flows to/from Las Vegas
- Proximity to Las Vegas visitor base

THREATS

- Continue to be seen as a "Drive Through"
- Financial supports not fully understood
- Do not control Amtrak decision making
- Environmental degradation impacts natural environments
- Economic recession could impact

LINCOLN COUNTY

WEAKNESSES

- Dispersed visitor assets
- Lack of overnight accommodations
- Limited retail and food & beverage
- Volunteer nature of tourism management
- Many assets are "latent"
- Limited collaboration
- Vacant storefronts
- Large geographic area and diverse themes

OPPORTUNITIES

- SNPLMA funding
- Increased coordination with Amtrak
- Greater collaboration with Las Vegas
- Travel Nevada's focus on rural areas
- Linking with other places in Eastern Nevada
- Addition of Amtrak stop

KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

SCENARIO ANALYSIS

A scenario testing exercise was shared with the 3D Steering Committee to generate discussion of possible ways Lincoln County could shape its tourism economy and messaging.

It was clear that participants did not want the destination to stay as is. There was too much future opportunity for the county to remain in the same place. Many recognized that Lincoln County could do more to convert drive-through travelers into day visitors, but day visitors' moderate spending would not achieve the county's ambitious goals for growth. Most agreed it made sense to step up efforts to attract more outdoor recreation visitors, while also connecting and engaging with a wider range of heritage and cultural travelers to broaden the county's overall appeal.

What kinds of tourism opportunities/ travelers do you think would be the best fit for Lincoln County?

DESTINATION
LINCOLN COUNTY

SCENARIO 1

Stay As We Are

SCENARIO 2

Convert pass-through travelers to daytrippers

SCENARIO 3

Increase overnight stays by enhancing outdoor recreation + heritage and culture.

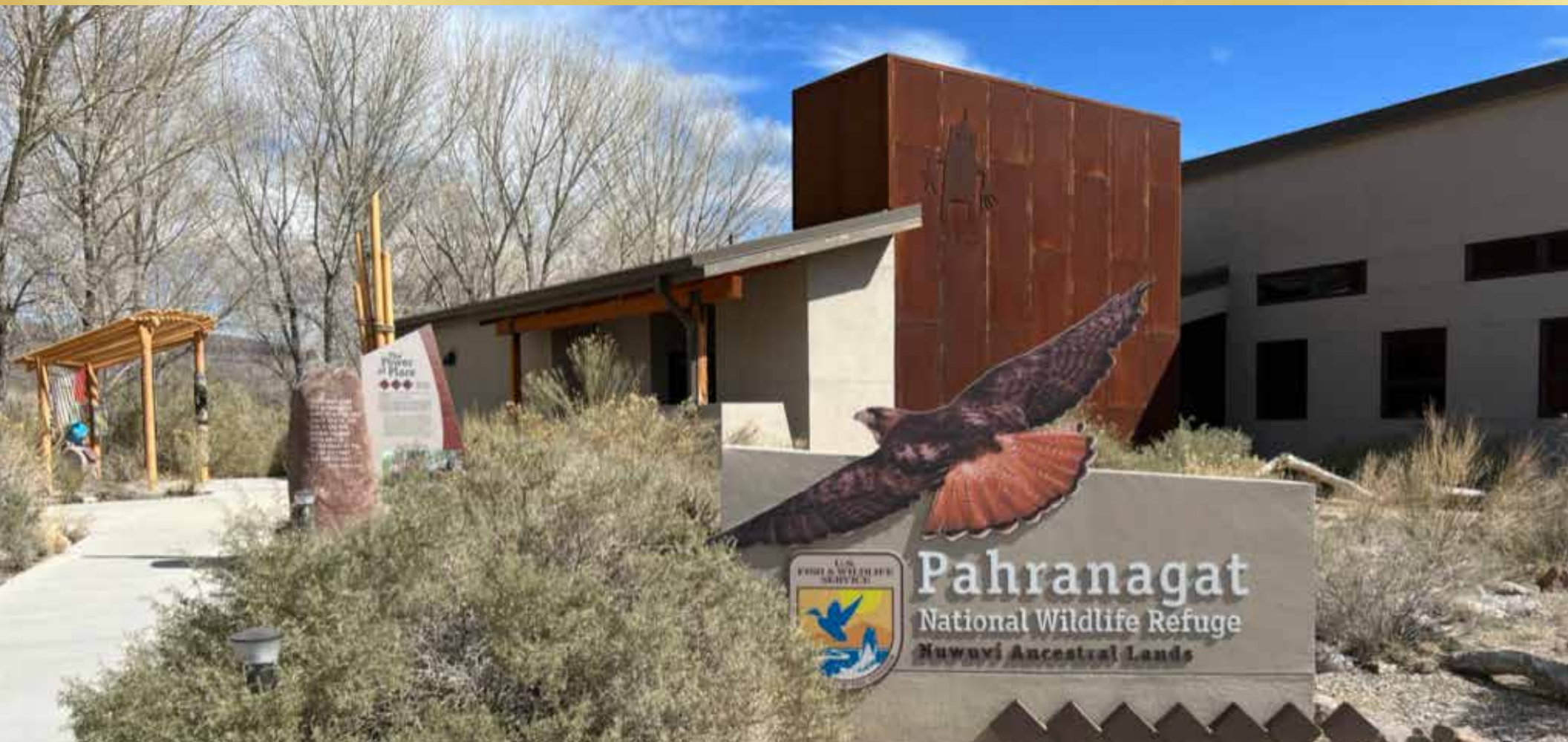
SCENARIO 4

Create your own

Scenario Analysis

LINCOLN COUNTY

THE DESTINATION PLAN



10YR VISION

FOR LINCOLN COUNTY TOURISM

Lincoln County will be increasingly recognized as a place where visitors and residents can experience the “Other Nevada.” It’s the combined assets of outdoor adventure, western and rail heritage, and even Area 51 that collectively differentiate us from any other place. Through investment and collaboration, tourism will become a significant part of the county’s economic base, while enhancing residents’ quality of life.



10-YEAR VISION

HOW THIS VISION ALIGNS WITH THE TRAVEL NEVADA BRAND

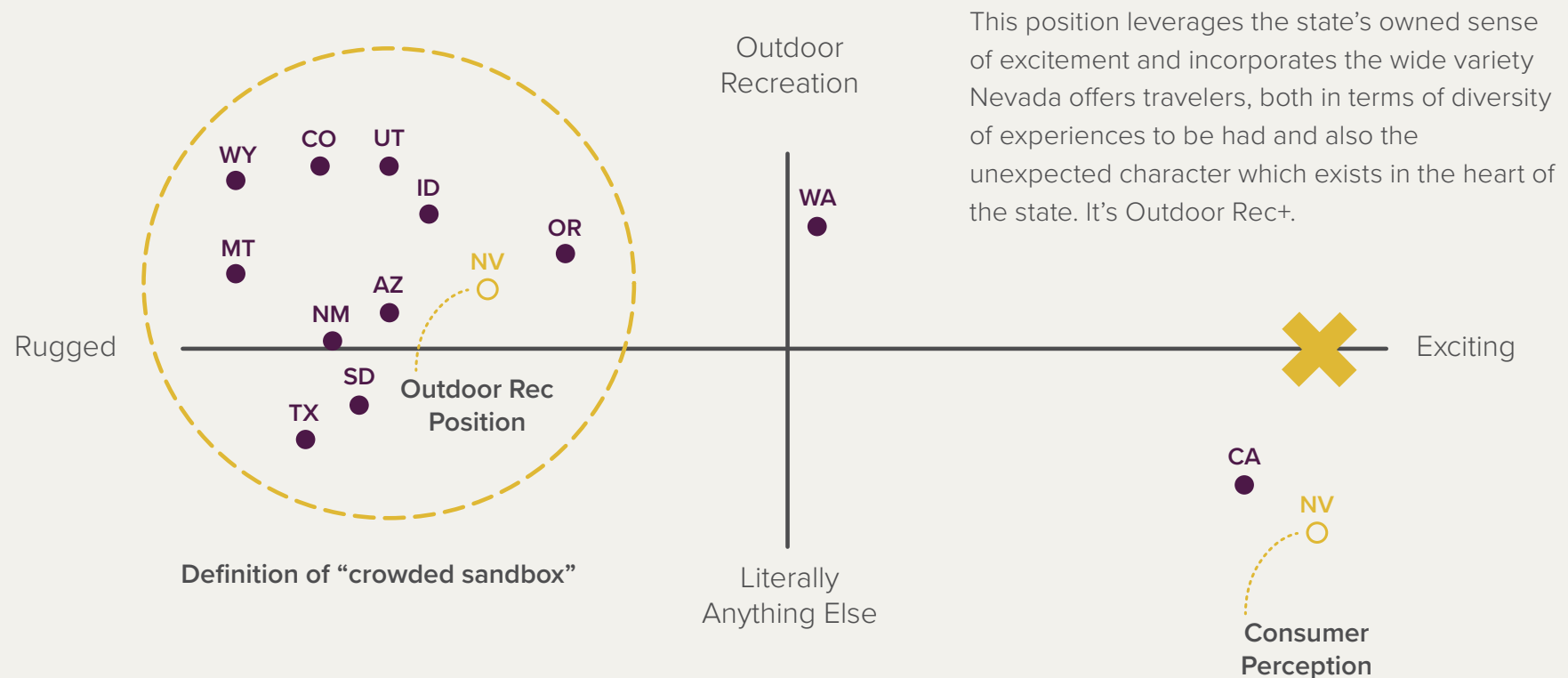
Travel Nevada's latest brand research shows the Silver State amidst a pack of Western states renowned for outdoor adventure, with one major exception. Nevada also is seen as Exciting. The state's brand agency calls Nevada's secret weapon "Outdoor Rec+." That positioning speaks to Nevada's opportunity to share a diversity of experiences PLUS

its unexpected character. Nevada's brand personality was unique among its competitive set — not just resourceful, independent and down-to-earth like so many other Western states, but surprisingly creative, offbeat and wild at heart, too.

Nevada's personality can find many outlets for expression in Lincoln County. The county's diverse range of outdoor experiences can be teamed with the breadth of its stories of Nevada's western

heritage, rail history and Mormon settlement. And what's more offbeat and wilder than the mystique of Area 51 and the Extraterrestrial Highway, especially when paired with the county's dark skies?

Like Travel Nevada, Lincoln County needs to think Outdoor Rec+. Following the state's lead can put the county on a path to make the most of its outdoor recreational assets and activate so many experiences that lie dormant today.



GOAL OF THIS PLAN

Lincoln County will quadruple annual visitation and double visitor spending by 2030, fulfilling a key goal of the county's 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Lincoln County has made a clear commitment for tourism to play a significantly increased role in the county's economy. The county has strong potential to expand visitation and visitor spending while managing impacts to its sensitive natural and cultural resources.

- **Diversify and Elevate Product Offerings.** While many in Nevada are aware of Lincoln County's outdoor recreation assets and people across the world have heard of Area 51, stories of the county's history and heritage are less well known. The county has significant opportunities to build its appeal for visitors by making its compelling history and other attractions come alive, whether through renovation or expansion, guided tours, or interpretive wayfinding. By creating more ways for visitors to access the county's unique experiences, more visitors will "choose Lincoln."
- **Help Visitors Understand How to Experience Lincoln as a Destination.** Lincoln County can be daunting to the typical visitor. Its large geographical size and widely dispersed assets make it difficult to navigate. Equipping visitors with inspiring itineraries and helpful wayfinding will stimulate more exploration.

- **Give Visitors More Ways to Spend.** The county can generate significant additional economic impact from tourism by providing travelers with far more opportunities to spend money when they visit or pass through. Stimulating development of more paid lodgings, restaurants and paid attractions is a key to generating economic impact from tourism.
- **Un-Shutter Buildings.** Businesses key to supporting a tourism economy, such as a bike shop, went elsewhere because they couldn't find commercial space in Lincoln County. By reactivating commerce in shuttered storefronts and commercial buildings, Lincoln County can expand its economic base and make its main streets more vibrant.
- **Create Guided Experiences.** Sparking development of guided day or overnight experiences can make it easy for visitors of all abilities to enjoy the county's many hundreds of miles of motorized trails and singletrack. Making more rentals available is another fundamental way to generate spending. Visitors who don't bring along a horse, an OHV, or a mountain or e-bike on their travels far outnumber those who do.

- **Expand the Array of Lodging.** The limited range of overnight accommodations restricts Lincoln County's ability to capture the all-important multi-day visitor. Creating new, unique lodging options, while renovating and re-activating existing inventory — especially historic roadside motels remodeled to the tastes of younger and outdoor recreation travelers — could expand availability while inspiring more visitors to make Lincoln County their destination for fun.
- **Build LCAT Capacity.** LCAT will play a critical role in helping build and expand the visitor industry in Lincoln County. However, its volunteer nature constrains the energy that can be directed to advancing tourism. Establishing sustainable funding for LCAT will be critical to fulfilling the county's potential to attract tourism and achieve CEDS Goal 9.
- **Build Reputation.** Limited funding also has restricted the county's ability to connect and engage with prospective visitors. While LCAT manages a website and social media, far more can be done to showcase the county, particularly as new tourism products and visitor experiences are introduced. Much outreach should focus on encouraging Las Vegas visitors and residents to explore the county.

THE TARGET VISITOR

Long-distance road trippers seeking a diverse range of experiences – from unique outdoor adventures to authentic Western history and heritage to UFO lore – in destinations offering diversity and wonder.

WHY THIS VISITOR IS RIGHT FOR LINCOLN COUNTY

Creating a sharp focus around a desired category of traveler is a highly effective way for a destination to shake off a generic image and make itself known for attracting visitors who appreciate the unique character of the place. Typically, these also are visitors whose interests fit well with what the destination values.

Lincoln County already is recognized by many Nevada outdoor recreation enthusiasts, drawn by its five state parks, a national wildlife refuge, and hundreds of miles of motorized and non-motorized trails. As previously noted, many of these visitors come to camp and bring much of what they need with them, contributing only modestly to Lincoln County's economy.

By focusing on the long-distance Road Tripper, Lincoln County can maximize its attraction for a major visitor segment that is far more likely to spend money on paid lodgings and leave a strong economic impact. An August 2023 Longwoods International study showed Road Trippers are far more likely than other leisure travelers to engage in destination offerings, especially cultural offerings like historic sites and museums, but also outdoor activities and entertainment. Those on trips of five or more days are even more likely to partake in these experiences.

For Road Trippers, the sheer size of Lincoln County is less daunting. This traveler's mission is to explore. They are inspired by access to a diversity of experiences, and as the 3D study shows, many are already inclined toward exploring rural areas. The same study also showed nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) describing themselves as a "Road Tripper – I enjoy hitting the road to see what there is to see along the way." Road Trippers' interests also align with the next two highest visitor segments — Nature Lovers and Cultural Travelers.

Source: 3D Tourism Development Study

High-Potential Personas for Lincoln County

HIGH VOLUME

- The Road Tripper
- The Nature Lover
- The Cultural Traveler

HIGH-SPEND/HIGH AFFINITY

- Outdoor Adventurer

HIGH-SPEND

- Motor Sports Enthusiast
- Hook-and-Bullet Enthusiast

Target Visitor

OUTCOMES OF THE LINCOLN COUNTY 10-YEAR DESTINATION PLAN

GOAL OF THIS PLAN

Lincoln County will quadruple annual visitation and double visitor spending by 2030, fulfilling a key goal of the county's 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

THE VISION

Lincoln County will be increasingly recognized as a place where visitors and residents can experience the "Other Nevada." It's the combined assets of outdoor adventure, western and rail heritage, and even Area 51 that collectively differentiate us from any other place.

Stronger Reputation

Accelerated Visitor Spending

DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

Western Heritage • Area 51
Caliente Railroad Depot •
Public Art • Trails • State Parks •
National Refuge • 4-H Camp

DEVELOP VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Lodgings • Vibrant Storefronts
• Entrepreneurship • Outdoor-
Friendly Events

DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

Funding resources for LCAT
• Local Ambassadors •
Stewardship

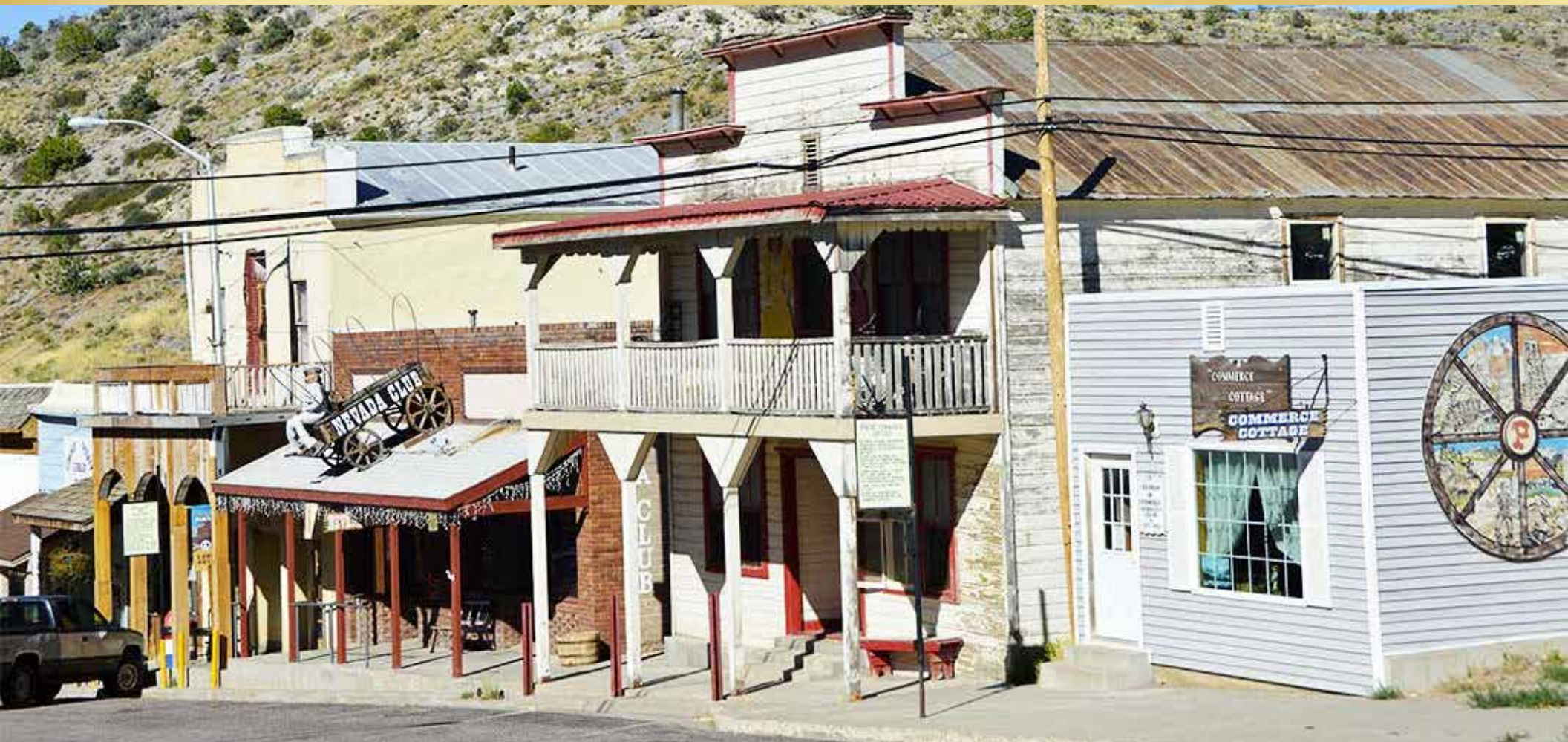
DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL STRENGTH

Outdoor Rec+ • Sharp Focus on
Target • Visitor Collaborations •
Alignment with State • Strategy
Cost-effective/High-Impact Tactics

TARGET VISITOR: LONG-DISTANCE ROAD TRIPPERS

Long-distance road trippers seeking a diverse range of experiences in destinations offering diversity and wonder.

LINCOLN COUNTY OBJECTIVES



OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

A. Elevate the power and allure of the county's Western heritage and Mormon settlement, in Pioche and Panaca, providing visitors with a true experience of Nevada's past.

- i. Develop downloadable guided tours sharing the rich stories of Pioche and Panaca through their historic buildings.
- ii. Seek funding for restoration of unique structures like the Gem Theater and the Old Firehouse and bring them back to life with programming such as Western movies or film festivals and tours.
- iii. Reorient the Thompson Opera House as the starting point for a visit to Pioche.
- iiii. Create periodic reenactments to bring Pioche and Panaca to life and give visitors a special reason to make the trip.
- iv. Position Pioche as a "Base Camp" for experiencing true Nevada western heritage along with nearby nature-based experiences, including a new trail that starts in town.
- v. In renovating historic buildings, strive to protect authentic interior and exterior features to preserve a true experience of Nevada history.

B. Build on the unique and compelling presence of Area 51 and the Extraterrestrial Highway.

- i. Leverage the extraordinary fame and drawing power of Area 51 in LCAT's website, publications, and other communications to engage travelers in exploring more of what the county offers.
- ii. Build partner support for incorporating Area 51 and Extraterrestrial Highway themes into their visitor experiences and communications.
- iii. Improve the extraterrestrial experience and connect it with unique new visitor offerings, such as Dark Skies overnight experiences or tours.
- iv. Develop a downloadable tour to guide visitors along the Extraterrestrial Highway and through Area 51 to share history, lore, first-person accounts, and tips to make the most of the experience.
- v. Explore ways other places – including Roswell, NM and Vernal, UT – are using UFO and paranormal themes to develop their visitor economies.
- vi. Integrate Area 51 theming in future development of a Visitor Center or Adventure Center and provide fun photo or video opportunities to engage visitors.

C. Capitalize on the redevelopment of the Caliente Railroad Depot and position the town's rail history as a compelling reason to visit.

- i. Advocate for resources to complete renovation of the Depot's roof and interior.
- ii. Develop a plan to maximize Depot spaces and create a strong arrival experience for future Amtrak passengers.
- iii. Consider feasibility of allocating space in the depot for a countywide visitor center or a Travel Nevada Adventure Center or for unique lodging on the upper floor.
- iv. Advocate for a Caliente stop on a new Amtrak route from Las Vegas to Salt Lake City.
- v. Develop a plan to address "last-mile" needs of future Amtrak passengers, including lodging, shuttles, connections with Lincoln County communities and experiences, and activation of the blocks near the depot.



OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP COMPELLING PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

D. Seek an International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) designation for Lincoln County and develop new ways for visitors to experience the county's stars.

i. Seek funding, such as a Nevada Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure grant, for expert assistance in seeking IDA certification.

ii. Support development of unique stargazing tours, stargazing parks and other opportunities — whether offered by outfitters, local organizations or public land managers — such as nocturnal animal tours, extraterrestrial storytelling, or night sky artistic events.

E. To leverage interest in Michael Heizer's City, develop art installations across the county, reinforcing key themes of interest for both visitors and residents.

i. Convene a countywide arts and murals planning committee to identify future topics and sites and advocate for funding. Themes could include Nevada's western heritage, the Role of Rail in Caliente, or Area 51.

ii. Create interpretative signage for murals and arts installations to increase engagement.

iii. Develop a self-guided mural or arts trail with an interpretive brochure, map, or downloadable digital guides.

F. Enhance Lincoln County's outdoor recreation assets while creating new ways for visitors to experience them, potentially through guided experiences.

i. Convene a trails planning group to identify opportunities to build the county's identity as a premier destination for motorized and non-motorized trail-based experiences.

ii. Advocate to secure Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funding to implement the top priorities.

iii. Consider engaging an expert resource to develop a comprehensive plan for a countywide system of recreational trails — including routing, wayfinding, naming, and identification of iconic trails — to attract outdoor recreationists.



As a designated recipient of funding from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act, Lincoln County already has secured more than 70 SNPLMA grants, including a linear rail park in Caliente and more than 20 miles of enhanced multi-purpose trails with trailhead improvements.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Build inventory of lodgings, RV parks, campgrounds, and ranch stays to accommodate more overnight visitors.

- i. Support development of small to mid-sized lodging properties, providing a mix of unique accommodations such as Airstream trailers, yurts, or cabins. Take lessons from emerging models like Autocamp.
- ii. Seek investment in revitalizing historic properties, especially the Caliente Hot Springs Hotel, and roadside motels to fit the tastes of outdoor recreationists and cultural travelers.
- iii. Seek development of additional RV parks and campgrounds, potentially through SNPLMA funding for needed infrastructure.
- iv. Consider supporting expansion of online lodging marketplaces such as HipCamp and Boondockers Welcome as a temporary means of increasing lodging supply.

B. Revitalize Main Streets and expand opportunities for restaurants and retail by activating unused storefronts and commercial buildings.

- i. Secure a third-party appraisal of vacant storefronts and commercial buildings to stimulate sales or use by increasing understanding of the properties' true value and condition.
- ii. Continue offering microgrants matched all or in part by property owners to stimulate private investment into improving storefronts and commercial buildings.
- iii. Provide absentee owners with no-cost options for showing empty storefronts and commercial buildings to potential buyers or lessees.
- iv. Encourage activation of storefronts and commercial buildings with engaging window displays celebrating local art, culture, history, geology, natural areas, or outdoor recreation.
- v. Advocate for enforcement of fire safety and other codes to prevent vacant commercial stock from falling into disrepair and posing safety hazards.

C. Foster local entrepreneurship and generate economic development by advancing trail-based recreational opportunities.

- i. Support creation of guided experiences, including hiking, horseback riding, camping, dark skies, and mountain biking, to attract both expert- and non-expert visitors.
- ii. Expand availability of rental equipment to engage visitors in Lincoln County experiences.
- iii. Drawing upon learnings from prototypes in Boulder City and Carson City, consider development of a Nevada Adventure Center as an incubator for outfitters, guide services, and other outdoor-related experiences, whether in a new or existing space or on wheels.



OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

D. Create local amenities to support outdoor culture.

i. Collaborate with owners to equip lodging with conveniences important to outdoor recreationists, including in-room or on-site storage for bikes and other outdoor gear.

ii. Collaborate with community leaders to equip communities to meet the needs of trail users, including staging areas for OHV users, bike racks, bike washes, and bike repair stations.

iii. Inspire local businesses to address the retail needs of outdoor recreationists.

iv. Encourage adoption of pet-friendly policies whether in lodgings or public spaces.

v. Improve trailhead amenities such as restrooms, parking, wayfinding, trash receptacles, shade structures and picnic areas and consider providing user-specific facilities such as equestrian water sources, pet facilities, and bicycle repair stations.

E. Explore options for supporting special events and the 4-H camp and learning center.

i. Identify spaces in locations such as the Caliente Railroad Depot or the 4-H camp that could be adapted as needed to serve as special event venues.

ii. Promote the new 4-H learning center as a unique training and special event environment.

iii. As visitor demand increases, consider exploring the feasibility of developing a dedicated facility for special events, conferences, and other gatherings.



The new 72-acre 4-H Camp & Learning Center in Alamo was created to provide educational and outdoor experiences for Southern Nevada youth. Similar to a longtime 4-H camp at Lake Tahoe, the venue also is available for conferences and special event rentals and can accommodate up to 72 overnight guests or 200 day visitors.

OBJECTIVE 3: DEVELOP ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

A. Develop additional funding resources for LCAT, enhancing its ability to manage and develop Lincoln County's visitor economy.

- i. Consider increasing the county's lodging tax rate and direct incremental proceeds to LCAT for staffing or other programmatic uses.
- ii. Consider extending the county lodging tax to include shared accommodations and private campgrounds.
- iii. Consider engaging a grant writer or liaison to identify opportunities and develop state and federal funding proposals for LCAT.
- iv. Seek grants to support staff or contractors to implement initiatives described in this plan.
- v. Schedule periodic community meetings to share progress of planning efforts and seek local input and support.

B. To build an army of promoters, increase local appreciation for attractions and equip locals to be inspiring ambassadors.

- i. Establish a hospitality training program, whether locally or in partnership with Travel Nevada, to increase awareness of local attractions, elevate customer service, and advance stewardship.
- ii. Establish and support an ongoing system of rewards, such as social hours or guided hikes and rides to create a community spirit around participation in training.
- iii. Consider developing a volunteer or intern recruitment strategy to expand hours of operation for special events.
- iv. Consider creating training to increase sensitivity for different cultures and backgrounds and to build the county's reputation as a place that is welcoming to all.

C. Establish stewardship messaging and initiatives to safeguard community and natural assets and build on growing interest in responsible travel.

- i. Convene a Stewardship Committee of land managers, business operators, and community members to identify priorities and establish a shared strategy for delivering key messages to protect and improve cultural and natural assets.
- ii. Consider developing "voluntourism" programs giving people a way to advance important county initiatives, connect more deeply with Lincoln County, and build the county's reputation as a place that cares about the quality of its experience.
- iii. Guide and support partners in creating infrastructure to achieve stewardship goals, such as water bottle refilling stations to reduce plastic waste.



One of Lincoln County's most unique places is Cathedral Gorge State Park. Its stunning clay geologic features are particularly sensitive, and visitors are educated on how to visit responsibly.

OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL STRENGTH

A. Build reputation by differentiating Lincoln County from other outdoor recreation-focused destinations and embracing the state's Outdoor Rec+ positioning.

i. Consider developing a tagline or catchphrase, such as “The Other Nevada”, reinforcing the county's unique blend of outdoor recreation and cultural experiences to express Travel Nevada's Outdoor Rec+ insight.

ii. Build a deeper relationship with the Nevada Division of State Parks and Travel Nevada to stimulate innovative thinking and special opportunities to experience five unique state parks in one county.

iii. Leverage the fame of the City art installation to highlight the wealth of outdoor experiences near it — even if very few people will have a chance to experience it.

B. Shape marketing, communications, and events to target key audiences, especially Road Trippers, seeking a mix of authentic Nevada experiences.

i. Shape Lincoln County messaging, marketing, social, and PR activities to target Road Trippers.

ii. Develop messaging to inspire Road Trippers to overnight in Lincoln County.

iii. Develop and maintain a list of the top 20 media outlets to target Road Trippers, including media in top source markets. Shape stories and pitch regularly to reach this key audience.

iv. Enlist local business partners, including gas stations and restaurants, in sharing the county's messaging for Road Trippers.

v. Create itineraries and maps to help Road Trippers navigate Lincoln County and understand where and how to find special experiences.

C. Lead collaborations to create meaningful Lincoln County experiences and outreach for large visitor segments.

i. Collaborate with destination partners — particularly Las Vegas, but also Salt Lake City, Boise, and Phoenix — to build and co-promote tour itineraries incorporating famous places like the Extraterrestrial Highway, or other experiences.

ii. Develop a campaign targeted at Las Vegas visitors and residents, particularly those newer to Nevada, inviting them to experience “The Other Nevada” in a close-by destination.

iii. Find ways to host groups intrigued by extraterrestrial experiences and position Lincoln County as a preferred place to convene.



OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP PROMOTIONAL STRENGTH

D. Align marketing strategies with Travel Nevada's brand, priorities, and initiatives to maximize the benefit of the state's national tourism campaign.

i. Develop and promote Outdoor Rec+ experiences to align with Travel Nevada insights and improve chances of being showcased in the state's promotional marketing and PR initiatives.

ii. Maximize opportunities to advance the Lincoln County brand and strategies through the state's cooperative marketing program.

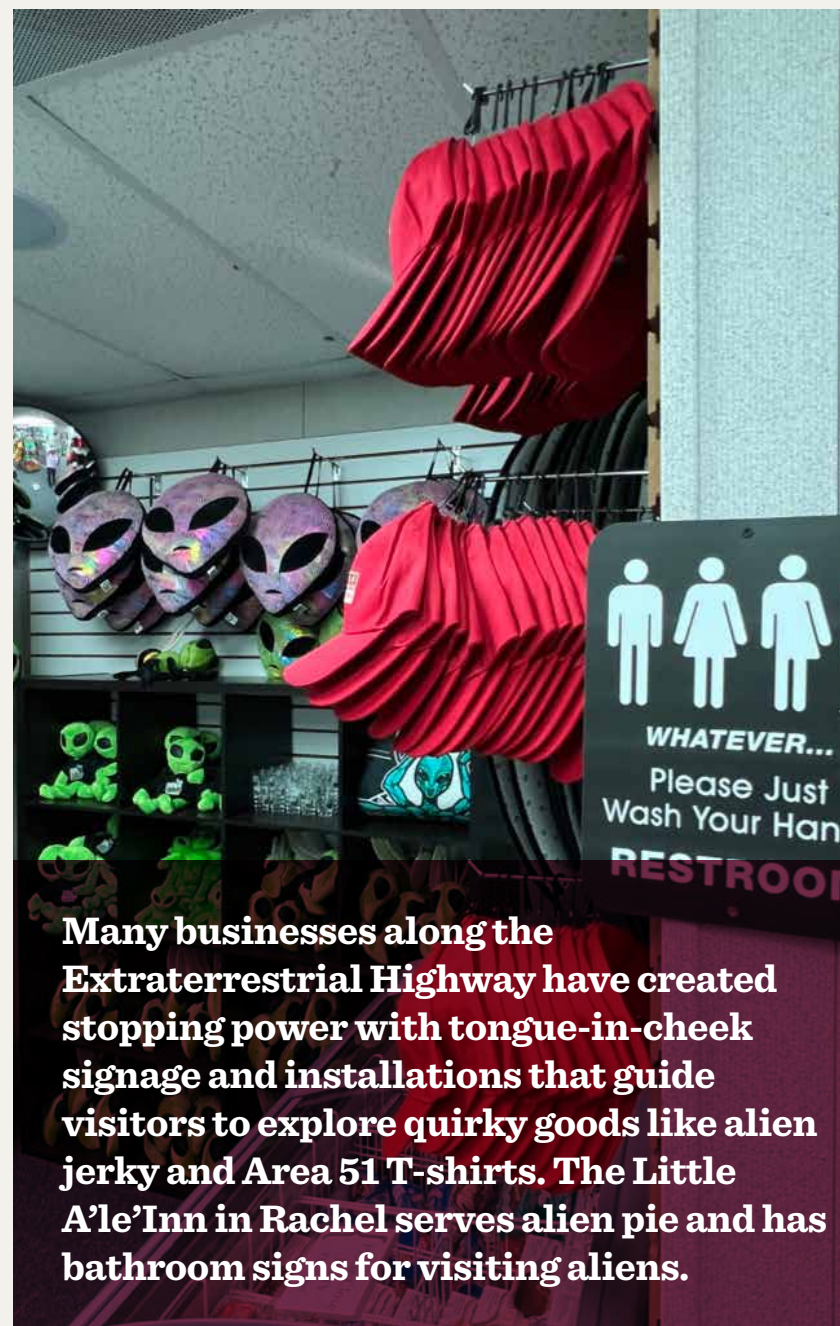
iii. Consider promoting Lincoln County's status as one of the least-populated places in the Lower 48 to express the "Other Nevada" positioning and set the County apart from crowded places.

E. Focus on high-impact, cost-effective marketing tactics to amplify Lincoln County's messages.

i. To leverage Lincoln County's location along U.S. Route 93, use wayfinding signage, markers and entry monuments, as well as messaging at restaurants and gas stations to interest passing travelers in staying longer or coming back.

ii. Address rising interest in short-form video by sharing unique Lincoln County experiences through digital storytelling and other digital and social communications.

iii. Enliven LincolnCountyNevada.com with videos, digital storytelling, and a clear appeal to Road Trippers.



Many businesses along the Extraterrestrial Highway have created stopping power with tongue-in-cheek signage and installations that guide visitors to explore quirky goods like alien jerky and Area 51 T-shirts. The Little A'le'Inn in Rachel serves alien pie and has bathroom signs for visiting aliens.

LINCOLN COUNTY

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



Suggested time frames for initiatives are recommended based on anticipated availability of LCAT resources and willingness of partners to take the lead on certain initiatives. Timeframes may shift over the life of this plan based on emerging priorities and availability of resources.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1-2 YRS

3-5 YRS

6-10 YRS

ONGOING

LAY THE FOUNDATION (1-2 YEARS)

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Aiii. Reorient the Thompson Opera House as the starting point for a visit to Pioche.
- Biv. Develop a downloadable guided tour along the Extraterrestrial Highway.
- Di. Seek funding to apply for IDA certification.
- Ei. Convene a countywide arts and mural planning committee.
- Fiii. Consider engaging an expert resource to develop a comprehensive plan for a countywide system of recreational trails.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Aiv. Consider supporting online lodging marketplaces such as HipCamp and Boondockers Welcome.
- Bi. Secure a third-party appraisal of vacant storefronts and commercial buildings.
- Biii. Provide absentee owners with no-cost options for showing empty storefronts.
- Biv. Encourage activation of shuttered storefronts and commercial buildings with engaging window displays.
- Ei. Identify spaces that could be adapted as special event venues.
- Eii. Promote the 4-H conference facility as a unique place for conferences, training, and special events.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Ai. Consider increasing the county lodging tax rate.
- Aii. Consider extending the county lodging tax to include camping and other traveler accommodations, such as Airbnb and VRBO.
- Aiii. Consider engaging a grant writer or liaison for LCAT.
- Aiv. Schedule community meetings to share progress of planning efforts
- Biii. Consider developing a volunteer or intern recruitment strategy.
- Ci. Convene a Stewardship Committee and establish a shared strategy.

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Ai. Consider developing a tagline or catchphrase, such as “The Other Nevada”.
- Bii. Develop messaging to inspire Road Trippers to overnight in Lincoln County.
- Bv. Create itineraries to help Road Trippers navigate within and to Lincoln County.
- Ei. Use billboards and other messaging to make passing Road Trippers hit the brakes.
- Eii. Share unique Lincoln County experiences through digital storytelling.
- Eiii. Enliven LincolnCountyNevada.com with visuals, videos and a clear appeal to road trippers.



IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1-2 YRS

3-5 YRS

6-10 YRS

ONGOING

GAIN MOMENTUM (3-5 YEARS)

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Av. Position Pioche as a “Base Camp” for experiencing true Nevada Western heritage.
- Cii. Develop a plan to maximize Depot spaces.
- Ciii. Consider the feasibility of housing a visitor center or lodging in the Depot.
- Cv. Develop a plan to address “last-mile” needs of Amtrak passengers.
- Fi. Convene a planning group to identify priorities for outdoor experiences.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Ciii. Consider creating a Nevada Adventure Center.
- Di. Support equipping lodging to meet the needs of outdoor recreationists.
- Diii. Support addressing retail needs of outdoor recreationists.
- Div. Encourage adoption of pet-friendly policies.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Bi. Establish a hospitality training program.
- Bii. Create a system of rewards to generate interest in hospitality training.

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Cii. Target Las Vegas visitors and residents to experience the Other Nevada.

MOVE TOWARD SUCCESS (6-10 YEARS)

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Aiv. Create reenactments to bring Pioche and Panaca to life.
- Bvi. Integrate Area 51 theming in a Visitor Center or Adventure Center.
- Eiii. Develop a self-guided mural or arts trail.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Eiii. Consider exploring the feasibility of a dedicated special event center.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Biv. Consider creating training to increase sensitivity for different cultures and backgrounds.
- Cii. Consider developing “voluntourism” programs.

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Ci. Collaborate with Las Vegas, SLC, Boise and Phoenix to co-promote tour itineraries.
- Ciii. Find ways to host groups intrigued by extraterrestrial experiences.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1-2 YRS

3-5 YRS

6-10 YRS

ONGOING

ONGOING INITIATIVES

1. Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Aii. Seek funding to restore unique historic structures and bring them back to life with programming.
- Avi. Strive to protect historic interior and exterior features to preserve a true experience of Nevada history.
- Bi. Leverage Area 51's drawing power in LCAT's website and publications.
- Bii. Build partner support for embracing Area 51 themes.
- Biii. Improve the UFO experience and connect it with new visitor offerings.
- Bv. Explore ways other places use UFO and paranormal themes.
- Ci. Advocate to complete renovation of the Caliente Rail Depot.
- Civ. Advocate for a Caliente stop on a new Amtrak route.
- Dii. Support development of unique stargazing tours.
- Eii. Create interpretative signage for murals.
- Fii. Advocate to secure SNPLMA funding to implement top priorities.

2. Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Ai. Support development of unique small- to mid-sized lodging properties.
- Aii. Seek investment in revitalizing historic lodging properties.
- Aiii. Support development of additional RV parks and campgrounds.
- Bii. Seek non-3D funding for microgrants for improving storefronts.
- Bv. Advocate for enforcement of fire safety and other codes for shuttered buildings.
- Ci. Support creation of guided experiences.
- Cii. Expand availability of rental equipment.
- Dii. Collaborate to equip communities to meet the needs of trail users.
- Dv. Improve trailhead amenities.

3. Develop Organizational Strength

- Ciii. Support infrastructure to achieve stewardship goals, such as water bottle refilling stations. .

4. Develop Promotional Strength

- Aii. Build deeper relationships with Nevada State Parks and Travel Nevada.
- Aiii. Take advantage of interest in the "City" art installation to highlight outdoor experiences nearby.
- Bi. Shape Lincoln County marketing to target Road Trippers.
- Biii. Develop and maintain a list of the top 20 media outlets to target for Road Trippers.
- Biv. Enlist local business partners in sharing messaging for Road Trippers.
- Bv. Create partnerships with other U.S. 93 destinations to develop tour itineraries.
- Di. Develop and promote Outdoor Rec+ experiences to align with Travel Nevada insights.
- Dii. Maximize opportunities through the state's cooperative marketing program.
- Diii. Consider promoting the county's remote location to express the "Other Nevada" positioning.

LINCOLN COUNTY

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ultimately, it is up to the people of Lincoln County — civic leaders, businesses, nonprofits, workers, volunteers, and other residents — to make this plan a success. By turning its strong community spirit toward implementing this plan, Lincoln County can fully realize the economic potential of its visitor economy and make its communities better places to live.

Lead Organization	Lincoln County Authority of Tourism	Manage the plan, build connections among partners and communities, support local business success, send clear messaging to target desired visitors, build the county's reputation, secure grants, rally residents and workers as ambassadors, advocate for visitor infrastructure, lead stewardship initiatives.
Partners	Attractions, community organizations, chambers	Lead designated strategies, develop offerings and messaging for road trippers, help improve visitor infrastructure, support activating main streets, champion hospitality training, join in new business recruitment, support stewardship and voluntourism initiatives.
Civic Leaders	State, county, city and schools	Fund trails and rails expansion and planning, fund strategies to activate shuttered commercial buildings and housing, fund infrastructure to support housing and development, implement tourism- and outdoor-friendly policies, plan to mitigate and address future user conflicts, support and fund reputation-building and promotional activities, support internships and expert-in-residence programs, address workforce recruitment.
Businesses	Lodging, restaurants, retail, agritourism	Take part in activating main streets, develop offerings and messaging for targeted travelers, join in implementing communication strategies, encourage participation in hospitality training, join in new business recruitment, support stewardship initiatives.
Land Managers	Federal, state and local	Collaborate on strategies for integrated trails system and interpretative wayfinding, address potential user conflicts, facilitate permitting for entrepreneurs and events, partner on experience development, create stewardship and voluntourism initiatives.
State Agencies	Travel Nevada and partner agencies	Collaborate to support economic and community development in support of quality of life in Nevada's rural places, including Lincoln County. Create opportunities for rural Nevada to address barriers and expand services, such as broadband access, infrastructure funding, and workforce development.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

LODGING TAXES

Lincoln County and the City of Caliente levy a tax on stays in hotels, motels, and privately owned RV parks and campgrounds and shared accommodations. The county levies an 8% lodging tax, while Caliente collects 11%. In FY22, this tax generated \$85,201 from overnight stays outside of Caliente and \$102,819 from those within the city limits. Combined, these taxes generated \$188,020 in revenue — \$41.95 for each of the county's 4,482 residents. That's about a sixth of the \$256.44 that White Pine County generates for each of its 8,788 residents. Lodging tax cannot be imposed on government-owned camping and RV sites.

Both the city and the county's tax rates are significantly below the average rate of 14% charged in the 150 largest U.S. destinations. Many U.S. travelers are accustomed to these rates, and with Lincoln County's relatively low prices for lodging, the impact for a traveler is relatively light. By moving to a 14% lodging tax rate, the city and county could generate about \$92,000 in added revenue each year. This could be dedicated to enhancing the LCAT budget and supporting economic development countywide with little impact for county residents. Lincoln County also can spur lodging tax revenue growth by recruiting lodging-related development. Lodging taxes can expand as new properties open, existing ones expand, shuttered properties re-open, or more rooms are filled during slower times of year.

Funding for Lincoln County Authority of Tourism (LCAT) Marketing

During the first half of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, LCAT received \$8,000 in county lodging tax revenues and \$12,490 from the City of Caliente's lodging tax collections. City funding supported part-time contractual administrative support while the county

helped to cover operational costs such as insurance, power, storage, phones and office supplies. Of the total funding, \$7,090 was used to support CAMBA bike events, trail maintenance and the Lincoln County Photo Festival. A stronger budget would equip LCAT to build the county's tourism economy, field marketing initiatives to more targeted travelers, build off-season occupancy, provide needed marketing support for the local business community, and arm the county to make progress toward the ambitious CEDS goals for economic growth.

Other funding opportunities

As one of six 3D Project participants, Lincoln County can apply for a significant share of a one-time \$2 million fund to implement initiatives described in this plan.

- Lincoln County is a designated recipient of SNPLMA funding, meaning the county, its public land agencies, and other organizations have access to significant grant funding. Future applications could be structured to expand trails systems, create interpretive wayfinding, and enhance cultural assets.
- The 3D Working Group's membership includes many state and federal agencies with resources that could advance initiatives described in this plan.
- The Governor's Office of Economic Development and its partners offer many options to connect rural entrepreneurs with capital, business resources, and learning networks.
- The Nevada Office of Federal Assistance serves as Nevada's clearinghouse for Federal grants and offers grant writing support and matching assistance to governments and organizations across the state.
- Travel Nevada maintains an extensive list of funding opportunities for rural tourism development at <https://travelnevada.biz/travel-nevada-partner-resources/>



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Many planning participants identified challenges that must be overcome for Lincoln County to fulfill its potential as a top mountain destination for trail-based recreation and unique cultural experiences.

Barrier	Challenges	Solutions
Limited population base	Restricts the supply of workers and volunteers	Support activation of shuttered housing, entrepreneurial opportunities, access to services and quality of life enhancements to attract and accommodate new residents
Shortage of skilled labor	Discourages development and renovation	Showcase recreation assets attractive to younger workers and create incentives including temporary housing, cash, free outdoor recreation gear, and free experiences to invite workers into the local community.
Limited accommodations	Constrains capacity for promotion and special events, reduces lodging tax potential.	Activate and renovate shuttered or underutilized properties, create a toolkit to recruit new properties, support entrepreneurs in creating unique lodgings, use online lodging platforms as a temporary measure.
Limited dining, shopping, rentals, entertainment	Lost opportunity to build economy, attract longer stays, generate spending, and satisfy visitor interests	Activate shuttered commercial buildings, identify non-traditional spaces or venues, identify capital and business startup resources, create investor toolkit.
Limited internet bandwidth and cell service	Isolates residents, businesses and visitors from resources, communications, and entertainment	Work with the State Office of Innovation and Technology to expand access.
Limited awareness of Lincoln County	Drive-through destinations lose opportunities for more visitors, overnight stays, travel spending, and support for attractions or businesses	Develop creative Marketing and PR campaigns, consistent messaging, unique events, reputation-building activities, and hospitality training.

Coordinated planning, collaboration, and communication is a key to addressing all Barriers and Challenges.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES AND THEMES

Lincoln County has some recognition in Nevada, but much of its identity is connected with the Extraterrestrial Highway and Area 51, the Silver State Trails system, the five state parks, and the Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge. Building additional awareness of this destination, given its large size and extremely limited marketing budget, requires ingenuity and strong collaboration around shared communications strategies.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- **BUILD REPUTATION.** Rather than raise awareness through costly brand advertising, partners can use strategies in this plan to create experiences and messaging celebrating Lincoln County as the “Other Nevada” to build fame among targeted travelers.
- **GENERATE PR.** Earned media is far less expensive than paid media. Lincoln County can build its reputation with a PR strategy targeting top media outlets for Road Trippers seeking diverse, authentic experiences. Creating pitches around themes below will support a consistent, effective message to build Lincoln County’s image for travelers.
- **INTERCEPT PASSING TRAVELERS.** Share attention-grabbing messages in-market to convince travelers passing through Lincoln County to stay a while. Idea: Feature compelling Lincoln County images on billboards, gas station posters, or table tents urging visitors to “Experience the Other Nevada.”

- **TELL STORIES.** Use rising interest in digital storytelling to share brief, inspiring Lincoln County experiences, even without paid media. Idea: Create Instagram Reels capturing creation of Lincoln County trails or art installations, interactions with quirky Extraterrestrial Trail experiences, renovation of the Caliente Depot, or tales of the historic Million Dollar Courthouse and jail in Pioche.
- **SHAPE THE WEBSITE TO THE TARGET.** While LincolnCountyNevada.com showcases many visitor experiences, LCAT has not had resources to design its site to meet current expectations for usability and visual appeal. Refreshing the site with inspirational imagery and videos, impactful copy, itineraries, and messaging aimed at Road Trippers is one of the most cost-effective ways Lincoln County can motivate potential visitors to choose Lincoln County, patronize its businesses, and recreate on its trails.

COMMUNICATIONS THEMES

- **ROAD TRIPS.** Lincoln County is made for Road Trippers. Give them compelling reasons to route their trip through Lincoln County — whether on their way to Las Vegas or Salt Lake City or a national park — and explore what the county offers.

- **NEVADA’S WESTERN HERITAGE LIVES ON IN PIOCHE.** Step back in time and see a scenic town that remains nearly intact from its days as a transportation hub and mining town. See an historic courthouse and jail, an underground mining shaft, an Opera House, the Gem Theater, and vintage firefighting equipment.
- **CALIENTE RAIL HISTORY.** Visit the iconic Caliente Railroad Depot and rail artifacts in the Boxcar Museum. Get a glimpse of how railroads shaped Nevada’s history and people.
- **MORMON SETTLEMENT.** The oldest surviving town in eastern Nevada, Panaca was founded in 1863 as a Mormon colony. Many of its townspeople are direct descendants of original settlers, and many of the unique buildings they created.
- **AREA 51 AND THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL HIGHWAY.** Hear the stories, drive the highway, see quirky sites, and become immersed in a place that inspires attention across the world.
- **EXPERIENCE A SIX-PARK ITINERARY.** Where else can you experience five distinctive state parks and a national wildlife refuge in two days? Hike stunning trails, enjoy lakes, watch wildlife, and explore slot canyons in soft bentonite clay.
- **STEWARDSHIP.** Nearly all of Lincoln County is owned by the American people. It’s pristine, and Lincoln County wants everyone to help keep it that way.



COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

WAYFINDING

- Establish a consistent approach to wayfinding and interpretive signs for trails. Include maps and interesting facts to inspire Road Trippers and Outdoor Adventurers to find their way to their next Lincoln County destination.
- Develop a consistent approach for welcome signs at the entrance to each community to create a sense of arrival and support the Lincoln County brand.
- Incorporate historic themes into signage and wayfinding for Pioche and Panaca. For instance, informational signage at the Thompson Opera House could be styled as vintage theater posters.

GETTING AROUND

- Create and share itineraries — within communities, among Lincoln County communities and attractions, and connecting Lincoln County with other places along U.S. 93. Share them on the web and through digital storytelling.
- Develop a Lincoln County Murals or Arts Trail with a brochure providing a map, brief descriptions of each, and a recommended walking path in areas with multiple murals or installations. Also share on the website.

- Create itineraries for OHV and mountain biking trails that connect recreationists with unique experiences.

EVENTS

- Use the “Park to Park Pedal” to elevate the identity of Lincoln County as a premiere destination for both road and mountain bike enthusiasts and showcase ways for participants to come back for more of what Lincoln County can offer.
- Develop OHV events that are connected with Lincoln County heritage experiences. Cross-sell the experiences to visitors with interests in both activities.
- To spur winter visitation, develop a broader array of holiday experiences beyond Kershaw Ryan’s Winter Wonderland. Inspire Las Vegas residents to visit another part of their state to enjoy small town activities and ways to celebrate the holidays.

STEWARDSHIP

- Work with public land managers to establish voluntourism opportunities. Invite recreationists and Road Trippers to help out and then stay for a fun experience.



MEASURES OF SUCCESS

To track Lincoln County's progress in building its tourism economy, performance measures are provided for each of the development objectives. It is recommended that Lincoln County establish a 2023 baseline for each indicator and report progress against the Economic Goal and Indicators at least annually.

ECONOMIC GOAL*

Lincoln County will quadruple annual visitation and double visitor spending by 2030, fulfilling a key goal of the county's 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

INDICATORS**

Objective 1: Develop Compelling Products and Experiences

- Visitation at key attractions
- Inventory of murals or art installations
- Miles of trails
- IDA Certification
- SNPLMA funding for product development or enhancement

Objective 2: Develop Visitor Infrastructure

- Growth in lodging inventory
- Reduction in unused storefronts and commercial buildings
- Net increase in businesses

Objective 3: Develop Organizational Strength

- Increase in LCAT budget and staffing
- Participation in hospitality training and events
- Participation in stewardship and voluntourism initiatives

Objective 4: Develop Promotional Strength

- Increase in lodging tax revenue
- Reduction in share of visitor dollar for fuel (Zartico)

* A specific goal to be attained by Lincoln County from implementing this plan.

** Outcomes to be monitored for impact on achieving the goal.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Travel Nevada

Brenda Scolari	Director	Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
Mary Ellen Kawchack	Chief Deputy Director	Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs
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Kyle Shulz	Research Manager	Nevada Division of Tourism
Caroline Sexton	Chief Marketing Officer	Nevada Division of Tourism
Susan Mowers	Creative Director	Nevada Division of Tourism

3d Working Group

Denise Beronio	Administrator	Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation
Shari Davis	Director, Rural Economic and Community Development	Governor's Office of Economic Development
Miles Gurtler	BLM NV Recreation, National Conservation Lands & Tourism Lead	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Tony Manfredi	Executive Director	Nevada Arts Council
Fred Steinmann	Director, University Center for Economic Development	University of Nevada, Reno

3D Advisory Group

Myron Freedman	Administrator	Nevada Division of Museums and History
Stacey Montooth	Executive Director	Nevada Indian Commission
Rebecca Palmer	Administrator	Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
Lucas Ingvaldstad	State Rural Development Director, Nevada	USDA

Lincoln County

3D Steering Committee

Denise Brown	Grants Administration	Lincoln County
Melissa Clary	Pioche Chamber & Gem Theater	White Pine Tourism and Recreation Board
Jeff Fontaine	Executive Director	Lincoln County Regional Development Authority
Sheryl Johnson	Realtor	America's Choice Realty
Jeff Johnson	Owner	Silver State UTV Rentals
Ethan Mower	Park Supervisor	Kershaw-Ryan State Park
Christine Prescott	Caliente Area Mountain Biking Association (CAMBA)	City of Caliente
Mike Reese	County Commissioner	Lincoln County
Craig Roisum	City Manager	City of Caliente
Steve Rowe	Mayor	City of Caliente
Ben Rowley	Publisher & Editor	Nevada Central Media
Cody Tingey	Regional Manager	Nevada State Parks
Marcia Hurd *	Executive Director	Lincoln County Authority of Tourism

Better Destinations Consulting Team

Cathy Ritter **	Founder and CEO	Better Destinations
Mitch Nichols *	President	Nichols Tourism Group
Carl Ribauda	President and Chief Strategist	SMG Consulting

* Project Leads

** Project Co-Lead

APPENDICES

- [Lincoln County 3D Application](#)
- [Lincoln County 3D Destination Asset Inventory](#)
- [Lincoln County 3D Stakeholder Map](#)
- [LincolnCounty Zartico Custom Report August 2023](#)
- [3D Tourism Development Study](#)

A 10YR DESTINATION PLAN

FOR LINCOLN COUNTY

