



# TOURISM & IDENTITY

## Review

To date, the City of Herculaneum has not seen the need to do much to promote tourism. It is essential, however, for Herculaneum to develop an identity plan: to bring visitors and revenue to the City through tourism; to bring local residents together, and to promote the local business community. With the unique and rich history of this community, it is prudent to capitalize on its storied past. It is one of the oldest towns west of the Mississippi River, and is currently making preparations to celebrate its 200<sup>th</sup> year anniversary.

Early settlers heard the first sermon west of the Mississippi River on the river front at Herculaneum; what a beautiful site that is. The largest lead smelter in the world – currently the Doe Run Company – has been in operation since the early 1800's in Herculaneum, supplying shot for such events as the Battle of New Orleans. The smallest state park (a state historic site) is in Herculaneum, where the Daniel Dunklin grave is located. These, and many more historical sites, are well kept secrets in Jefferson County. People need the opportunity to experience Herculaneum and it is our responsibility to make them aware of our existence. Herculaneum should hold festivals that depict its rich history. We need to market Herculaneum with much pride, enthusiasm and celebration.

There are many quality parks in Herculaneum, which just need a little attention; parks where more emphasis could be placed on the promotion of youth sports and the general physical well-being of the residents. Quality softball/baseball fields generate large revenues for a city by attracting regional and national tournaments. Families will travel across the country to attend tournaments, using hotels, and spending money in stores and restaurants.



One of many lovely parks in Herculaneum

Cultural, historical, and seasonal festivals or special events, which draw visitors on an annual or regular basis, are an excellent way for communities to increase economic development. Appreciation of the arts is another possibility through Arts and Humanity Councils which are common in many progressive cities. Whether it's a community playhouse, a festival, or a fine arts show exhibit, Herculaneum could offer potential tourists a reason to visit, or artists a place to show their talents. With the construction of a community center, people would have a place to congregate for exciting events, including indoor arts and crafts shows or other events requiring a roof over their head.

Herculaneum has not given much thought to a vision for the future until the writing of this Master Plan; they probably thought there was no need to do so. However, now planning is taking place and the concept of "Identity" has surfaced. What do we want our identity to be? How do we want to think of ourselves and how do we want others to think of us? In thinking about what tourists would like or enjoy, we will need to look at ourselves and see how we can make Herculaneum better. What can we do to improve on the positive things in our community to make this a better place to live and to make it a destination for tourists? These are the questions the master plan team has been struggling with and some of the solutions will be found throughout the Plan and in their recommendations.

## Marketing Objectives



1. Develop programs that will actively encourage tourism in the City of Herculaneum.
2. Encourage government officials, business owners and local citizens to become more actively involved.
3. Bring in outside experts to assist the City in its planning and promotional efforts, if needed.
4. Make the City's parks more user-friendly; more conducive to special events and other family and tourist activities.
5. Create an identity, an image for the City that is pleasant and would make it a better place to live and a great place to visit.

## Situation Analysis

### 1. Analysis of Present Market Factors

- Herculaneum could draw from the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, Western Illinois, Jefferson County and other neighboring counties for special events if they were properly planned and promoted.
- The economy is slow. Herculaneum's per capita income is below that of surrounding cities. Tourism dollars would be a benefit to the local economy.

### 2. Problem Areas

- City leadership needs to become more involved in organizing and planning special events to attract tourism.
- A campaign needs to be waged regarding participation and volunteerism.
- The creation of the City Park Board is a very positive step toward upgrading the city park system to an adequate/progressive park system conducive to special events.

### 3. Identification of Current Resources

- Herculaneum has parks somewhat suitable for special events:
  - \* Bates Park, which is located on the Joachim Creek has a pavilion and a boat ramp.
  - \* Dunklin-Fletcher Park on Main Street is a small area with picnic tables, benches and a beautiful view of the Mississippi River.
  - \* Shot Tower Park is a small park with benches on Main Street.
  - \* The historic gravesite of Governor Daniel Dunklin overlooks the Mississippi River (a great meditation site).
  - \* The Joachim Golf Course is a public nine-hole golf course owned by the Doe Run Company and is leased for a fee to the golf club.



### **Recommendations**

1. Encourage City officials to become more pro-active regarding quality of life issues.
2. Encourage everyone to enhance the City's image so that residents and visitors all come away with a more positive image of Herculaneum.
3. Encourage participation and/or sponsorships among local businesses.
4. Herculaneum has a high school auditorium that could be used for special events. It seats 570 people and could be used to hold concerts, plays, talent contests, etc.
5. The Fairgrounds could be used for summer concerts, fairs and festivals.
6. Efforts should be made to conduct an annual festival with name acts, battle of the bands, fiddle and dance contests, arts and craft shows, horseshoe and washer tournaments, etc. and to capitalize on the town's rich history.
7. Churches and service organizations could be more actively involved in the community by sponsoring breakfast and dinner during a special events.
8. Herculaneum should rotate with the City of Festus to sponsor the annual Fourth of July fireworks display.
9. A road to the River already exists where a ferry could dock and load in Herculaneum to cross the Mississippi River to Illinois. This ferry needs to become a reality to attract tourists into and out of the community.
10. Located on the Mississippi River, the City could be the entertainment/recreation capital of Jefferson County and attract tourism from all over the country.
11. Houses currently owned by the Doe Run Company sit vacant. These homes potentially could be used for craft shops, antique shops, bake shops, coffee shops, etc. Essentially, an antique village could be established, with a flea market on weekends. This would bring in hundreds of people and revenue for the town and shop owners.
12. Biking/jogging/walking trails along the River could bring people to the area.
13. Homes for Beds and Breakfasts would bring people to the area. They could be advertised in national magazines.
14. The Doe Run Company has fifteen acres overlooking the River where a wedding chapel could be built on the River bluff. It would bring in revenue for the City, catering companies, florists, bakeries, local entertainment, and banquet halls, etc.
15. The City needs to be promoted as much as possible. There should be annual events at places such as the Fairgrounds to create a family-oriented atmosphere, with carnivals for kids, arts and crafts, flea markets and concerts. This would increase interest and participation in the community.
16. Herculaneum needs a community or civic center to have large concerts and events; rooms could be divided for smaller events and meetings.
17. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) should be contacted to have the grave of Governor Dunklin and its surrounding area cleared of weeds and brush, landscaped with flowers and shrubs. The embankment should be cleared so the beautiful Mississippi River, River traffic, and Illinois can be seen and enjoyed. Park benches should be added. This has the potential to be a beautiful historic site for tourists and residents.
18. When hotels, motels and B&Bs are established in Herculaneum, a tourism tax should be levied so the City can afford tourism activities and special events, which are common in other cities.