SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO’S HERITAGE TOURISM ASSOCIATION
IS HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Mission San Juan Capistrano is forming a Heritage Tourism Association.

The diverse shops and entities in the San Juan Capistrano downtown share in the goal of serving the local, regional and international Mission visitor or traveler while also simultaneously promoting the rich history of San Juan.

The downtown is comprised of unique buildings and entities that offer a one-of-a-kind experience not found on the internet and only experienced in person. The outstanding setting of a historic, eclectic, attractive vibrant downtown with a walkable core is something worth celebrating and keeping by leveraging the marketing efforts of all. As home to the world famous Mission, Mission staff knows that visitors come primarily to see the landmark but along the way they often discover the broader San Juan downtown.

With enthusiasm and appreciation for all that the area has to offer, this marketing effort will work to coordinate some marketing items that bring together the largest and most successful history-based businesses with the smaller retailer and restaurant shops within short walking distance of the Mission.

Among the many historic and cultural assets, San Juan Capistrano is also home to the Los Rios Historic District, Native American history, the Legend of the Swallows, a historic train depot, an equestrian heritage, a renowned library, many outstanding community curated adobes, festsivals, concerts, and art shows -- all within a short walking distance from one another.

With nearly 300,000 annual visitors there is an unmet need to give existing visitor-ship more information about what to do after they visit the Mission and thereby keep visitors in town a little longer to discover San Juan Capistrano.

As a result, Mission San Juan Capistrano is now inviting local designated businesses and non-profits located within the Los Rios Historic District and Mission Business District to join in its inaugural San Juan Capistrano Heritage Tourism Association/Marketing Co-op. To date the El Adobe, Swallows Inn, Cedar Creek Inn, Hidden House Coffee and Ramos House have indicated they will be joining the Association.

“We have a unique opportunity and responsibility here in San Juan Capistrano to share our wonderful history with the community, the region, even the world,” said Mechelle Lawrence Adams, Executive Director of Mission San Juan Capistrano. “It’s not only our pleasure, but also our obligation to ensure the community’s past is recognized and celebrated in a way it truly deserves – and of course, where possible help it to be economically worth doing.

“In the downtown the most successful businesses are those located in historic buildings, and yet this fact often goes overlooked in favor of a focus on new businesses. It is key that we celebrate our heritage-based economy and that we leverage it to produce greater awareness. Our marketing co-op ultimately will celebrate the historic businesses first and then those entities that serve history as a reason for visiting the area.”

Adams further states: “With each entity focused on its own sustainability for these past years since the recession, it ends up that we are marketing the area like a disconnected quilt. That quilt merely needs to be stitched together to retain visitors in the area a bit longer.”

As a result, Mission San Juan Capistrano is investing $10,000 in direct marketing funding to develop maps and collateral materials to be given to its annual visitors to the landmark or Store shoppers to show them what to do after the visit the Mission. These items will be generated in January, 2014.

The concept, initiated by the Mission Preservation Foundation, has also been endorsed by Ann Ronan, president of the San Juan Capistrano Chamber of Commerce and owner of San Juan Capistrano Travel.

The opportunity to join with prospective membership in the HTA Marketing Co-op is nearing its deadline as the enrollment deadline is Oct. 31. Contact the Mission at (949) 234-1312 to get involved. Membership marketing benefits will launch officially with collateral and online outreach by Jan. 2015. For more information, contact the Mission at (949) 234-1312.