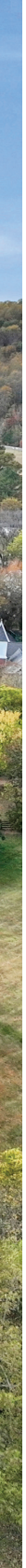


CHARTING YOUR OWN VISION:

LESSONS FROM LEIPER'S FORK







Learning from Leiper's Fork

Carroll Van West, Ph.D. Tennessee State Historian and Director, MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Across the nation are invaluable places that embody our core values of freedom, opportunity, discovery, and community—places where we can sense much more than a history experience and encounter a vista into what our future can be. Leiper's Fork, a rural crossroads community in Williamson County, Tennessee, is such a place.

Its story begins with Indigenous peoples drawn by creeks and springs, the bottoms rich in wild game and the trails that passed through the land. In 1801, the family of Thomas Hart Benton left their home in Hillsborough, North Carolina, for this place. Soon thereafter young Benton studied law and became a state senator in 1809, the beginning of a career of public service as the West's most persuasive voice for expansion, what his age called our "manifest destiny." In 1879, his daughter Jessie Benton Fremont, who cut her own swath across our western history, told a Franklin legislator: "If I ever have time to do what I would like, I would visit the former home of my father. I know he remembered with great pleasure his early life near Nashville."

Dignified by a historical marker, the Benton home foundations remain on Old Hillsboro Road. But the story hardly ends there with the Bentons. A railroad and sawmill helped to launch the village of Hillsboro in the late 1880s. Then the modern-day story pivots to a building across the street from the Benton home at a crossroads landmark known as Green's Grocery. Its adaptive reuse into a performance venue in 1994 was but a moment in the long history of Leiper's Fork. But it was a transformative moment, launching the 30-year experience that we call the Leiper's Fork Preservation Movement.

This booklet is about that Movement, which began a few years earlier when residents and newcomers were determined that their village would not become just another rural "anywhere USA" place. Instead, they chose to take their past, their traditions, their different opinions, and their strong sense of community to chisel out a pathway to lasting progress, in step with the changing times but paying due respect to those who came before.

Leiper's Fork is the heart of a living cultural landscape—the place where the beat of commerce, community life, music, faith, and education keeps the community alive and vibrant. In these pages we talk about the challenges and successes. We outline principles that kept us square and level. And we offer this testimony: The preservation and rebirth of Leiper's Fork is no miracle. It is the result of people working together, keeping the place whole, recognizing all the pasts that came this way, and keeping an eagle eye out for opportunity and community. You can take these lessons to your own community, carve your own pathway, and begin to imagine the futures that await.

*Front cover image taken by Solomon Davis,
courtesy of the Leiper's Fork Foundation Inc.*

Charting Your Own Vision—Lessons from Leiper’s Fork

Long before its twenty-first century renaissance into a world-class music and arts mecca, Leiper’s Fork – both the village and the land surrounding it – experienced centuries of transition, challenge, and revival. Today, the story of Leiper’s Fork is one of coming back to its roots in the digital age, blending the best of old and new into a truly unique place to live and visit. And while it may seem like the stars were aligned for Leiper’s Fork’s success in land conservation and cultural preservation, communities in a variety of situations and conditions can still apply many of the same practices.



Courtesy of “Leiper’s Fork and Surrounding Communities” by Rick Warwick

As people continue to leave big cities for the benefits small towns and villages provide, those quieter places often find themselves striving to maintain rural character and green space—while also wanting to strengthen the local economy. Some, like Leiper’s Fork, are on the edge of sprawling development from nearby cities. Others are more isolated and facing decline. But many strategies that Leiper’s Fork used (and continues to use) with great success can be utilized in large and small communities and towns, regardless of location and circumstances.

The Leiper’s Fork approach is certainly different than the more formal, regulations-based policies that characterize incorporated cities and towns. But there are universal principles, including developing a strong vision and building reciprocal partnerships, that can be beneficial in almost any community endeavor. Certainly in Leiper’s Fork, dedicated individuals inspired, led courageously, and fostered ideas. But without partnerships that worked for both sides, little would have been accomplished. Leiper’s Fork’s success is ultimately community-based. The village remains committed to preserving the culture of the people who currently live and have lived there for generations, recognizing that communities are living landscapes first and tourist destinations second.



Pickin' Corner, courtesy of Anne Goetze

With this approach, the regulatory practices that govern preservation and development in larger towns and cities are less necessary. Instead, a shared community preservation and conservation ethic, supported by a strong local economy that utilizes heritage tourism and quality of life to attract like-minded residents and visitors, helps to maintain the best parts of the past for the betterment of the future. The power in these practices comes from community goodwill generated by working together toward improvement and providing new cultural, tourism, and economic opportunities that benefit the whole community.



Front porch sitting, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

It's important to remember that preservation is often more about the future than the past. Decisions made now will shape communities for years to come. And these proactive best practices show that preserving historic character and conserving land can remain a vital part of a community's living and changing landscape.

Step One: Inventory Your Community Assets

Sometimes it's hard to know where to start. So before moving into a full-scale revitalization effort, a good first step is to develop a detailed inventory of the community's assets. The information gathered can then be used as a baseline to begin planning.



Documenting a local cemetery, courtesy of Rick Warwick

First, believe in the value of your location! Each community is uniquely different with something valuable to share. That difference may be reflected in topography, architecture, natural scenic beauty, and/or local culture. The most appealing places reflect a distinctive sense of place, and gaining familiarity with those resources is a great way to begin preservation and conservation efforts. Compiling a detailed inventory of places, people, and assets will allow residents to view the community as a whole and prioritize preservation efforts.

It’s important to remember that assets are more than buildings and places. Develop an inventory that includes the skill sets of stakeholders that support economic development, preservation, conservation, and heritage tourism initiatives. Don’t forget to include existing organizations and businesses with a vested interest in improving the community that may be able to provide beneficial assistance and expertise.



Church and community members host free county dance lessons in the Hillsboro United Methodist Church Pavilion, courtesy of Hillsboro United Methodist Church



A location's quality of life can also be a huge asset. Many people fleeing the cities want things smaller towns can more easily offer—lower rents and home prices (at least at first), less traffic, a welcoming atmosphere, lower business startup costs, less regulation, lower crime rates, and the ability to enjoy life at a slower pace. These less tangible aspects are nonetheless valuable resources that provide tremendous benefits.

Locally handcrafted figures created to help raise funds for the local school, courtesy of Anne Goetzet

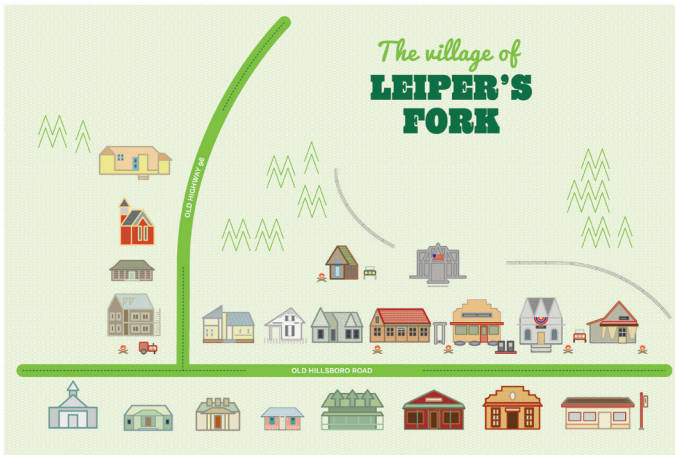


Aerial view of the village taken by Solomon David, courtesy of the Leiper's Fork Foundation Inc.

A detailed inventory focuses on what makes each individual place special, incorporating as much relevant information as possible. Photographs, addresses, owner names, architectural descriptions, condition of the resources, contact information, and a brief historical overview should be included when applicable. The following assets should be included:

- 1) **Places**— museums, historic homes, buildings (courthouses, offices, schools, churches, shops), barns, roadways, bridges, battlefields, locations of historic events, interpretive markers, sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, sites associated with public figures and notable people
- 2) **Natural resources**—undeveloped green space, farms, forests, parks, scenic vistas and byways, wildlife habitats, bodies of water

- 3) **Businesses**—stores, banks, offices, galleries, downtown squares
- 4) **Creative resources**—arts, crafts, music, dancing, singers, storytellers
- 5) **Heritage tourism potential** of places, local festivals and events
- 6) **Restaurants**, particularly those featuring local and regional products and cuisine
- 7) **Stakeholders**—business owners, bankers, technology experts, writers, photographers, tradespeople, teachers, local volunteers, state and local government agencies, nonprofit groups
- 8) **Quality of life contributors**—less traffic, green space, slower pace, safety, entrepreneurial opportunities, lower cost of living, a sense of belonging and community



Map courtesy of John Turner

Step Two: Develop a Clear Vision

When residents first started to envision Leiper's Fork's potential, the village had been in decline for some time despite the encroaching growth around it. Before the first revitalization projects started, there was nothing in place to help residents fight the onslaught of development or reinvigorate the village's neglected state. However, recognizing the village's potential and using an inventory of its assets led to a big vision of what Leiper's Fork could become, and the same holds true for places with similar challenges.

Key elements for developing a strong vision for the future:

- 1) Use a detailed asset inventory as the foundation to evaluate and maximize the area's potential.
- 2) Rely on simplicity, determining the community's most important priorities and remaining focused on those areas.
- 3) Remain consistent, knowing that it's inevitable any plan will require minor changes, but the primary mission should remain true to the original vision.

- 4) Dream big, developing significant and inspiring goals for the future and achieving those goals step by step over time.

A community's vision can be just as important as its resources. A strong vision and mission identify conservation and preservation priorities, drive the practices to achieve those goals, and help determine what type of changes will follow. A clearly stated vision also allows both existing and new/potential community members to understand the community's preservation values, strategies, and opportunities to support plans for the future. In short, it allows people to see where the community is headed and how they might want to be involved in helping to get there. Finding creative and flexible ways to implement that vision will drive the next steps.

Step Three: Listen to the Community

It's not enough for a handful of residents to simply conserve land or revitalize buildings. In many cases, the most successful project leaders realize they also need to build strong relationships within the community.

Many places already have strong preservation, conservation, and/or economic development organizations that drive their agendas and manage projects. However, the absence of a strong central organization is not necessarily a problem. In some cases, it may be a benefit. In Leiper's Fork, community members quickly realized that effectively involving residents and volunteers came from listening and respectful engagement and dialogue—maintaining a civil society. If you do that, a formal organization isn't so necessary.

The greatest success comes when projects are community-driven by local energy and expertise, rather than a top-down approach that dictates what to do and how to do it. It's crucial to develop a commitment to working together toward common goals and coordinating diverse interests and perspectives.



Participants and volunteers at the annual Chili Cookoff, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

Will everyone agree on the best course of action every time? No. But when economic and cultural survival is at stake, people tend to be more willing to work together. Encourage opportunities for people to meet, discuss options, and work together to generate plans. Differing ideas and viewpoints often spur even more creative solutions, where the old and new find ways to join forces in surprising ways toward a common beneficial goal.

The best of a community comes out when people rely on one another. As new residents arrive, there can be some friction between those who have deep roots in the community and newer members. In Leiper's Fork, much of this tension was alleviated by building new relationships that relied on each other. New residents who were renovating buildings hired local builders, tradespeople, and craftspeople rather than using chain businesses or larger regional companies, resulting in mutually beneficial long-term friendships and partnerships. Long-term residents welcomed newcomers into their existing businesses and traditions. Working together helps build genuine relationships and trust.



Leiper's Fork residents working together, courtesy of Anne Goetze

It's also beneficial to find out what brings the community together. Is it an existing festival or an institution like a school? For Leiper's Fork, music provided a powerful link that drew people together. Creating events run by volunteers, such as the Leiper's Fork Bluegrass Festival, connected the community through a shared history and love of music. Similarly, the local school had been a focal point for the community for a century, despite its challenges. Recruiting volunteers to help create an innovative school program also brought old and new residents together, working toward a common goal that would improve the entire village's quality of life.

Some change is inevitable as a community begins to revitalize, although some residents may be resistant to that. Engaging and empowering the community to participate gives people a feeling of ownership in that change.



Bluegrass Festival volunteers, courtesy of Anne Goetze

- 1) Recruit volunteers, which gives ownership and gets people excited about opportunities to shape their own community.
- 2) Focus on your shared vision and goals.
- 3) Celebrate and invest in the existing community events, sites, and traditions that have engaged residents.
- 4) Encourage stakeholder collaboration in making decisions—allow room for diverse ideas and perspectives, giving an opportunity for those with competing views and interests to find a way to work together toward a common goal.
- 5) Buy goods and services directly from local residents instead of hiring outside companies.
- 6) Emphasize social inclusion and avoid bringing in an exported culture—support the local population in what they are already doing.
- 7) Focus on supporting and improving local institutions such as schools, which encourages residents to stay.

Historic Leiper's Fork
SINCE 1801

2014 EVENTS CALENDAR

2/14	Sweetheart Dinner and Dance Puckett's Grocery, 7pm-10pm.
3/1	Far Saturday Night Show! Cost. Costume Dance Puckett's Grocery, 7pm-10pm.
4/19	Treasures of the Fork Gathering Join the folk & help spring clean the village roadhouse Lauchlin Theatre, 8:30am
4/26	3rd Art Show 3 Galleries, 3 Shows, 1 Magical Evening, 6pm-9pm.
5/23	Muscle Shoals in the Fork Documentary Lauchlin Theatre, 8pm.
5/24	Muscle Shoals in the Fork Concert Lauchlin Theatre, 8pm-9pm.
6/7	Franklin Half-marathon/Pow Wow Field, 6:30am
6/14	Bertha Homecoming Community dance & celebration Lauchlin Theatre, 8pm.
8/29	Franklin Home Night Lauchlin Theatre, 8pm.
8/30	Forkfest Concert Lauchlin Theatre
9/20	Bertha Fish Fry & Dance Bring your dancer! Show and appetite. Fork Community Center, Supper at 5pm, Music at 6pm.
9/27	Remote Control Fly-In The best in model airplane technology and competition! Preston Farm, All day
10/4	3rd Art Show 3 Galleries, 3 Shows, 1 Magical Evening, 6pm-9pm.
10/10-10/12	Leiper's Fork Yard Sale/Preston Farm
10/18	Grand Of Chili Cookoff Taste the best in chili recipes, 11am-2pm.
11/1-11/2	Leiper's Fork Turkey Shoot Shoot to win! Home turkey and ham. Proceeds benefit area families. Preston Farm, 10am Duck.
12/13	Christmas Parade The annual dance, home-grown parade, 2pm.

HISTORIC LEIPER'S FORK
Take a drive to the unforgettable Leiper's Fork on either side of the rolling pastures, barns and historic homes. Step back into time in this National Register of Historic Places rural village where preservation and community matters. You'll find everything from high art to home cooking, live music and family chatter. Kick up your heels or sit back and rock the world away.

SHOP
Nearly a dozen boutiques and galleries with art, antiques, fashion, home decor, rare books and other treasures.

STAY
Cute overnight lodging available at one nearby with deluxe amenities in beautiful downtown settings.

EAT
These restaurants to satisfy taste buds from World and Three Country and Cuckoo cooking to Forkin' Forkin' style.

ENJOY
Live music and social events offering world-class entertainment.

ON-GOING EVENTS
Live Music Most Nights, Open Mic Thursdays
The original Puckett's Grocery
Summer Movies at the Lauchlin Theatre
Friday nights, June-August at Duck
Haunted Woods
Friday and Saturday nights in October

Visit LeipersFork.com/Events

Located in Williamson County, just a short drive outside Downtown Franklin.
FOR MORE INFORMATION
VisitLeipersFork.com

Facebook.com/leipersfork TNleipersfork.com Instagram.com/leipersfork

Leiper's Fork Calendar of Events, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

Step Four: Build Strong Reciprocal Partnerships

The most successful long-term projects and movements recognize there is strength in numbers. Learning how to effectively recruit good partners and allies is critically important when developing a new idea. Invite and encourage participation from residents, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses; more can be done together than individually.

First, as noted above in evaluating your assets, identify what partnerships already exist. Great partners come in many forms, from an individual willing to volunteer to a financial donor to a business owner who can help promote the project.



Residents and business owners discuss partnerships with Land Trust for Tennessee Conference attendees in Leiper's Fork, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

Partnerships should be reciprocal. Since everyone has a stake in the outcome, all partners need to support and participate. The best partners are those who are willing to share the workload, share a similar vision, and have an incentive to make the community a better place.

It's important to remember that not every community will have a strong benefactor. However, any community can become a place where people can “get involved, take action, and not rely on the government to supply all the answers.” It doesn't necessarily require a financial investment from every partner, but rather a commitment to help and a stake in the outcome.

After you've identified good partners, it's time to build relationships and invite them to participate in your project. Partnerships can be formed at the local level, but don't forget about resources that are statewide, regional, or even nationwide. Local colleges and universities can also be excellent sources of expertise and support. Coalitions that incorporate a variety of public and private partners are valuable, and sometimes it helps to incorporate local leadership, including city, county, and state governments, when needed.

Step Five: Embrace the Whole Community and Tell Your Whole Story

Preservation thrives in places where the land and landscape (even if in disrepair at first) reflect an authentic sense of history and culture. That distinctive sense of place is what sets each community apart.

Conservation and preservation are crucial to maintaining that authenticity. This can come in many forms—preserving buildings, conserving land, maintaining traditions and events, and interpreting historic places. Even roads, bridges, and natural resources can be historic and tell a story. Since most communities are also living landscapes, preserving authenticity doesn't always require a lot of change. Often, basic repairs and sprucing up without changing historic character can provide a jump-start to revitalization. And remember, authenticity means that a location doesn't have to be perfect—sometimes what appear to be imperfections are what actually make a community fun and unique.

Authenticity stems from more than preserving the physical landscape. Telling the stories that built a community are what make a site truly come alive to visitors. Communities need to be willing to share their whole stories (not just what's perceived as the pretty and appealing parts) because visitors today seek accuracy and truth in the places they choose to visit.



Locally developed exhibit at Leiper's Fork Market, courtesy of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

Telling an inclusive history embraces the diversity that makes up every community. That shared history incorporates the history of African Americans, Native Americans, and other people of color; the roles of women; the whole story of the Civil War and its aftermath for both sides of the conflict; societal transformations over time; economic booms and busts; and the roles individuals of all backgrounds played in a community's development. It's important to incorporate the histories of all people who contributed to a community's evolution, sharing the stories of workers, tradespeople, enslaved people, farmers, and builders along with the town founders and business titans.



As communities move forward with their preservation, conservation, and economic development efforts, remember that revitalization doesn't mean a place has to become a "tourist destination." Leiper's Fork doesn't sell itself as a tourist hotspot. Instead, it is a living cultural landscape that welcomes visitors into the community, providing a place for both residents and visitors to meet, shop, eat, and gather together.

Benton Well and Slave Cabin historic marker, courtesy of Deborah Warnick



Leiper's Creek Gallery event welcomes residents and visitors, courtesy of Lisa Fox

Step Six: Capitalize on What's Being Done Around You

One of the best parts of the Leiper's Fork approach is the realization that you don't have to become a consumer-driven tourist destination, with all the necessary services and bureaucracy that often comes with that. Make the most of what you already have in place and build upon that.

Providing a welcoming environment for residents and visitors doesn't always require a huge financial investment or participation in a formal organization to attract tourism. Building new relationships is often about hosting and hospitality, simply being willing to "open your home." Sometimes it's as easy as inviting organizations and individuals to your location to experience it. There is tremendous value in someone having a great experience firsthand, and the price of a nice lunch and an afternoon spent sharing a location can reap big dividends. Invite representatives from Chambers of Commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, Main Street programs, downtown business/merchant associations, newspaper and magazine writers, state tourism organizations, and anyone else who would benefit from visiting and helping promote your community.

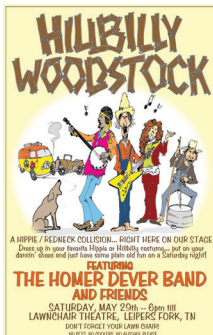


Regional partners along the Natchez Trace meeting at Green's Grocery, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

A big advertising budget isn't initially necessary, especially when communities are just beginning to promote what they have to offer. When Leiper's Fork was first getting started, residents built relationships with local and regional publications that were looking for great story content. In today's social media-driven world, it's even easier to share information. Convention and visitors bureaus and local tourism organizations often utilize social media to reach large audiences and are willing to cross-promote events and activities that will draw in visitors. Developing your own social media presence also offers an easy, inexpensive, and effective way to reach those who might be interested in visiting or even relocating.



Breakfast meeting with travel writers, courtesy of Deborah Warnick



Event posters courtesy of Bruce Hunt

Conclusion: Ok, I'm Ready. What's Next?

What Action Plan? Just Jump In and Get Started

Once a community has inventoried its assets, developed a shared vision, and started to build partnerships, it's sometimes hard to know what do to next. That's when someone has to just jump in and get started.

One of Leiper's Fork's most revered citizens put it best when she said, "We didn't know that we didn't know how to do things, so we just did them." That philosophy became the foundation for the many unique events that make Leiper's Fork such a popular destination. It's a place filled with fun, (mostly) free events that attract visitors across the nation, because there's always something going on in Leiper's Fork. While some are large-scale affairs, most are just small, creative endeavors that bring the community together with the outside world. And each one started from an individual with a fun idea who recruited others to help make it happen.

It's a model that may not work well for everyone. But for places that are just getting started in their preservation, conservation, and/or tourism efforts, it's a way for communities to start getting things done, without relying on a centralized, formal organization. Someone has an idea, brings in community volunteers, and works together to accomplish the project or goal.

Community volunteers form the cornerstone of this philosophy. They bring a sense of ownership and inclusion, which is ultimately what both established and new residents want. Relying on each other to help out and pitch in brings a sense of belonging, a sense of responsibility, and a vested interest in the outcome.



Bluegrass Festival volunteers, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

Lean on a Creative Economy

Across Tennessee and the nation, many once-thriving industries in rural areas—agriculture, textiles, mining, and logging, to name a few—are in decline. Creating a new culture of local entrepreneurship is often the best way for rural communities to continue to survive. As it becomes more and more challenging to farm full time, communities are rethinking what it takes to conserve their rural lifestyle and still provide ways to earn a living. In Leiper's Fork, that meant moving from dependence on agriculture and services to a more creative, internet-based economy.

Sometimes, the most determined preservation efforts come from communities struggling with economic and job losses, population loss, or threats of development. Often these challenges provide the right environment for community members and local officials to start working together to bring about change and new opportunities. As broadband internet services continue to expand, greater access is now available to those who were once tethered to cities and towns. New opportunities to develop online businesses and services can fill the gaps left behind as traditional industries have closed or relocated.

Preservation and revitalization in downtown corridors remain a great first step. In contrast to big cities that often rely on big industries, smaller communities like Leiper's Fork do better with more compact, community-driven development. Adaptive reuse allows historic, original structures to be repurposed for new uses. Creating an attractive place for people to work and live provides a powerful draw for new businesses. Leiper's Fork has been successful because both long-term and new residents worked hard to actively recruit and welcome new businesses and make it easy for them to open. When preservation, conservation, and revitalization start to enhance overall quality of life, people take notice. Emphasize all the great qualities that make the community a great place to live, and residents and businesses will follow.



Community landmark Green's Grocery hosts everything from community meetings to musical events, courtesy of Heather Durham Photography

Use These Quick and Easy Tools and Ideas

In today's digital and social media-driven world, it's all about the photo op, which can reap big tourism dividends. Opportunities for great pictures don't have to be expensive—they just need to be unique. Murals have become increasingly popular in a number of locations and can provide an easy way to draw in visitors. In Leiper's Fork, however, the photo ops are successful because they remain authentic to the town's distinctive style and spirit. Along the main street heading into the heart of the village sits a replica of Deputy Barney Fife's Mayberry squad car. Nestled in a pull-off right before entering the village, it's a place where both residents and visitors love to stop and take a picture. It's a novelty that's quirky and different and fun—just like Leiper's Fork itself.



Barney Fife car parked outside the village makes a great photo op, courtesy of Deborah Warnick

Another simple and inexpensive way to make a place welcoming is to provide plenty of places for people to sit and visit. Leiper's Fork encourages people to congregate in almost every location—not just in front of restaurants, but in less likely places like stores and galleries. Common areas provide another space for interaction, events, and gatherings, which can also raise the value of local property and beautify the downtown area. From fire pits to rocking chairs to benches, this shared use of space makes residents and visitors always feel welcome. People feel ownership in saving and supporting the places where they are encouraged to spend time. And that leads to greater economic development as people are drawn to friendly places to eat, shop, and visit.



Residents and visitors are welcome to sit and gather in many places in the village, courtesy of Deborah Warnick and Ansley Page

Opportunities in a Rapidly Changing World

Beginning in 2020, the COVID-19 global pandemic changed the way that many people thought about travel, work, and living situations. A majority of travelers decided to forgo overseas destinations and lengthy air travel, opting instead to vacation closer to home. Driving trips within a 250-mile radius remained steady, providing another great opportunity for small, local destinations to maximize their visitation in the local travel market.

Places that offered outdoor recreation gained even greater appeal among travelers desperate for a change of scene but still wanting a safe environment to maintain social distance. While big national and state parks have remained very popular, even small local parks and walking trails have witnessed increased usage and visitation.



The landscape surrounding Leiper's Fork taken by Solomon Davis, courtesy of the Leiper's Fork Foundation Inc.

The pandemic also brought about a shift in residential living patterns. A spring 2020 Harris Poll survey found nearly 40% of U.S. adults living in urban areas said they would consider moving “out of populated areas and toward rural areas.” Suddenly, densely populated cities with few opportunities for nearby recreation began to lose some of their appeal, as residents evaluated new options for places to live that offered greater open space, smaller populations, and increased safety.

Small, rural communities are often uniquely positioned for growth as people move from densely populated cities in search of a better quality of life. Simplicity, affordability, community, and quality of life—all these things are available outside the confines of big cities. Once again, the land is calling people back, now perhaps more than ever before. The time is right for small communities to proactively use these best practices to reinvent and reinvigorate themselves, maximizing and marketing their inherent assets as a foundation for long-term sustainability.



Image taken by Solomon Davis, courtesy of the Leiper's Fork Foundation Inc.

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