

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Big State, Local Story A Two-Day Border Tourism Workshop in Laredo and Rio Grande City

March 6 & 7, 2015 Get the insider's perspective on six new tourism models in Laredo and Rio Grande City

Through a partnership with the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the City of Laredo and Rio Grande City recently developed new tourism experiences that celebrate the vibrant cultural heritage of the border. Statewide participants are invited to explore the tourism development process during behind the scenes learning sessions hosted by the cities' creative leaders. Find inspiration while experiencing border comida with Frontera Fusion, vaquero roping and rope making with native plants, heritage dancing and courtyard defense, CaminArte and Bazaar, and Teatro Tejano de la Calle and more!

Individuals and groups are invited to visualize their own city's authentic places, stories, and people through a fresh heritage tourism lens. Expect to leave with prioritized ideas, an end-to-end management plan, and a strategy for pairing local talent and collaborative energy for renewed heritage tourism results in your city.

Hispanic Heritage Travel Guide and Mobile Tour

This spring the THC will release a large scale print travel guide and mobile app featuring Texas' rich Hispanic heritage. Workshop assistance provides interested communities an opportunity to highlight their heritage through enhanced tourism efforts, leveraging the new THC travel tools for increased visitation and economic benefits.

TWO-DAY WORKSHOP SCHEDULE (final times and venues may be updated prior to workshop)

March 6, 2015	LAREDO Dress comfortably and wear walking shoes!
9:00am – 1:30pm	Workshop Session I La Posada Hotel The new face of heritage tourism, contemporary audience demands for authenticity, connecting with locals and developing experiential products
11:30 – 12:30	Working lunch provided. Leaders of Teatro Tejano de la Calle share reasons behind story selection and theatrical tour methods.
12:30 -1:30	Workshop Session II La Posada Hotel Collaboration of community organizations and assessing downtown for visitor readiness Leaders of CaminArte and Art Bazaar share experiences of working downtown and collaboration with diverse organizations
2:00 – 3:30	Frontera Fusion cooking classes at Vega's Interiores Mejicanos and La India Packing Company, transportation provided
4:00 – 5:00	Workshop Session III La Posada Hotel Combining human, cultural heritage and historic built environment resources together for new tourism products in your hometown. Participants prioritize brainstorm ideas.
5:15 – 6:15	Teatro Tejano de la Calle tour begins and ends at La Posada Hotel
6:30 – 8:00	CaminArte + Art Bazaar guided tour and practice downtown assessment Dinner provided at Art Bazaar (San Agustin Plaza)

March 7, 2015 RIO GRANDE CITY

Dress comfortably to rope, dance and walk!

- 9:00 – 11:00am Workshop Session IV 506 E. Main Street, Xtreme Party Conference Room
Developing infrastructure for operations, sustainability and marketing of heritage products. Presentation of Rio Grande City’s centralized approach, leaders share their experiences and lessons learned. Attendees consider options for administration and plan end-to-end operational needs for their heritage tourism product and are given marketing and publicity strategies and tools
- 11:15 – 4:00 Tourism Product Demonstrations Lopez-Tijerina Courtyard, 405 E. Mirasoles
Lunch with tamale talk and demo
Ranching Heritage Program: rope making with indigenous plants and vaquero roping skills
Courtyard History and Defense Program
Dancing and Music Rio Style
- 4:15 – 5:15 Q&A regarding Rio Grande City’s heritage products, Lopez-Tijerina Courtyard

LAREDO PRODUCTS SHOWCASED DURING WORKSHOP

Frontera Fusion at Vega’s Interiores Mejicanos, 4002 San Bernardo Avenue.

Frontera Fusion celebrates Laredo’s blend of cultural culinary influences through traditions and recipes found in many abuelas’ kitchens. These traditions are experienced by way of contemporary chef inspired food practices and aesthetics. Guests will leave with the special tools, spices and techniques to create Border Comida in their own homes.



Set in the lush courtyard of Vega’s Interiores Mejicanos, one of Avenida San Bernardo’s oldest family-owned import businesses, this class is about the molcajete, the traditional Mexican version of the mortar and pestle. Be prepared for the aroma, taste and practice of grinding your own spices and preparing food in a basalt stone tool that is also a serving dish and a creative table decoration.

Frontera Fusion at La India Packing Company and Tasting Room, 1520 Marcella Avenue

The Antonio Rodriguez family has been selling Mexican chocolate and spices from this house on Marcella Avenue since 1924. This successful Texas Treasures Business Award recipient now offers an extensive variety of whole or blended spices and herbs and renowned handmade dishes in the onsite restaurant. Class will prepare “Shroomizo” a healthful vegetarian version of chorizo with all the trimmings for delicious tacos.

Laredo Art Walk – CaminArte & Art Bazaar, begins at Laredo Center for the Arts

A major new downtown event, CaminArte celebrates the rich history of art and architecture in Laredo by showcasing regional artists’ visual and performing arts in sites throughout the historic downtown core. Visitors will receive a guide detailing the building history and art displayed at each art stop location. The walk ends in San Agustin Plaza where the Art Bazaar featuring food, music and local art will coincide with the art walk on a quarterly basis.

Teatro Tejano de la Calle

A dramatic retelling of Laredo's cherished history using actors, sites and simple theatrical effects is set in



the streets of Laredo. History becomes drama as stories unfold in a sweep across personalities and centuries: Tomas Sanchez recounts the founding of Laredo and the mystery of his grave, Carlos Ortiz relates the construction of one of Laredo's oldest houses, a paperboy bellows about the election riots, a recovering soldier talks about the daring exploits of La Cruz Blanca, and Antonio Zapata tells us how he lost his head when the Republic of the Rio Grande came to an end.

RIO GRANDE CITY PRODUCTS SHOWCASED DURING WORKSHOP

Ranching Heritage

Rope-Making and Vaquero Roping Class – Learn the history and practice the techniques used by Native Americans and early settlers to transform native plant fibers such as agave into rope while other healthful uses of indigenous plants are revealed. Try your hand at vaquero roping techniques as guided by an expert and learn about the competitive tradition practiced regionally today.



Ballet Folklorico Heritage Dance Classes

Dancing and making music are traditions integral to the social life of Rio Grande City. Learn the significance of social events, the history of regional music, and try a few steps as you are guided by professionals in the Polka, Cumbia, Guapanga, and other time honored dance traditions.

Demonstration

Courtyards: Beyond the Beautiful Landscapes

Entertaining friends in a lush setting may not have been the original concept for Rio Grande City's distinctive courtyards lining the main street. Actor-delivered narrative dramatizes the familial life of the courtyard through Rio Grande City's turbulent history of frontier rancor and romance.



For questions please contact April Garner, THC Heritage Tourism State Coordinator at 512.463.2630 or april.garner@thc.state.tx.us

Big State, Local Story is a Heritage Tourism Program initiative funded in part by TxDOT's Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program administered by the Texas Heritage Trails Program.