



Crossroads of the American Revolution Association

PO Box 590
Bound Brook, NJ 08805
Phone (732) 721-1047
www.RevolutionaryNJ.org

NJ Travel & Tourism Cooperative Marketing Grant 2005

FINAL REPORT (8/31/05)

Executive Summary

New Jersey's first *Celebrate New Jersey!* promotion in June, 2005, was launched to create an occasion for a grassroots, statewide celebration of pride in "things New Jersey"—our state symbols, our place in history, our world-class theater and arts, a multiplicity of recreational opportunities, NJ souvenirs, and "off the beaten path" travel as well as "tried and true" events and activities. As *Celebrate New Jersey!* becomes an annual event, the "treasure" we seek is nothing less than a deeply felt pride in the dignity and prominence of our state.

Improving NJ's image empowers everyone

Dignity and pride come from within and are fostered by a shared awareness of our collective value. Many people (including many of our own citizens) have an outdated sense of New Jersey and don't yet appreciate the source of our riches—New Jersey's diversity: our lush landscapes, dynamic industry, well-developed support of the arts, proud history, multiplicity of religions, recreational options and varied ethnicity.

Celebrate NJ! Month (June, 2005) demonstrated conclusively that it is possible, beneficial and desirable to promote New Jersey's assets and heritage by dedicating the month of June to that purpose. Through our campaign, important partners in business, government, and other sectors engaged with us to initiate what will become an annual event and, over time, will reshape the public image of the state to more accurately reflect all that is wonderful and notable here.

Tangible results (measured in column inches of "free" print media coverage) included publicity valued at over \$160,000 for New Jersey and for the more than 300 *Celebrate NJ!*

designated attractions—events that drew crowds of visitors to enjoy New Jersey recreation and experience our heritage.

Celebrate NJ! identified NJ's not-very-funny "humorous characterization" in the New Jersey/Pennsylvania AAA Tour Guide (which had persisted since at least 2001) and created the opportunity for NJ Travel & Tourism and the NJ League of Municipalities to influence AAA to change their opening text about New Jersey. Happily, the 2006 Tour Guide tells a very different story! Individuals, emboldened by our campaign, sent *Celebrate NJ!* postcards by the thousands to friends and family within and outside the state and sent us testimonials of places where they politely and respectfully confronted NJ-bashing and got a positive response (e.g., the Philadelphia Duck Bus Ride driver whose scripted narration was replete with jokes at NJ's expense). *Celebrate NJ!* materials can help lay the groundwork for *Celebrate NJ! 2006* through schools and other public venues (e.g., service club presentations, conferences and conventions).

Changing NJ's image changed us too

We ourselves have learned by doing. We now have important affiliations and contacts forged in the first year's campaign. We know more about what works and what doesn't. Perhaps most important, we've shown that a grassroots program can produce big results with a modest budget. With expansion of the 2005 campaign in multiple, localized efforts with more lead time and deeper partner involvement, change can accelerate and be even more gratifying. Crossroads staff and volunteers themselves discovered personally how much there is to enjoy in our state on any given day. We've become the sort of

ambassadors for New Jersey that we hope every resident will be in years to come.

We're eager to plan for 2006! We hope the NJ Travel & Tourism Commission will agree that June, 2005's Celebrate NJ! campaign has been a very good return on its investment of \$25,000. In a successful business, it's well known that "everybody sells"—from the receptionist to the President. Similarly, in our state, we need many voices at all levels who say, "Enough!" to the negative characterizations about NJ and speak out about New Jersey's abundant positive qualities.

Building Statewide Cultural Heritage Tourism

As the initiator and coordinator of *Celebrate NJ! Month*, Crossroads is now providing leadership in partnership with

others to create a statewide process for developing significant cultural heritage tourism opportunities, including those for New Jersey's private and public Revolutionary sites.

Attachments:

1. Newspaper
2. Celebrate NJ! passport
3. Celebrate NJ! postcards
4. Celebrate NJ! draft resolution
5. Celebrate NJ! poster
6. Oct. 21, 2004 conference flyer
7. Oct. 21 graphic of NJ's state tree showing the relationship of NJ's Revolutionary heritage to the other sectors (arts, business, education, travel & tourism, etc.)

The Power of the Whole

On October 21, 2004, a group of 115 individuals representing a cross-section of statewide interests, assembled to address the question, "Should New Jersey have a statewide festival of itself?" The answer was a resounding "yes" and the *Celebrate NJ!* campaign was born. The vision that emerged was to reawaken our pride as New Jerseyans and to give every citizen an opportunity to become an ambassador for our great state. Our intention was to create widespread awareness and pride in New Jersey's contributions to the nation and the world, including New Jersey's pivotal role in the American Revolution.

In Jan., 2005, when we finalized the strategies for *Celebrate NJ!* Month, we were aware that the negative characterizations of New Jersey dated back to Colonial times when Benjamin Franklin described NJ as "a barrel tapped at both ends." Phrases like "the butt of comedic barbs," "a state so often scorned," "a state that's just one big chemical plant replete with the nation's largest network of toll roads" (or some version of these ideas) are sadly all too common in the media. And, at this point, these images have unconsciously become embedded in the minds of those of us who work and live here (e.g., "What exit are you from?").

But throughout this first-ever *Celebrate NJ!* campaign, we discovered that the charm (and power) of NJ and people's love of NJ is easily tapped as well. Many individuals expressed pride in their town's involvement in the Revolutionary War, their local theater and arts organizations, and the charm and natural beauty of NJ's towns and landscapes. As we traveled throughout the state promoting *Celebrate NJ!*, again and again we heard phrases like "It's about time!" and "Why haven't we done this before?" Although other groups have launched statewide celebrations in New Jersey (most recently, the last,

quite successful National Arts & Humanities Month in NJ in Oct., 1999), none have addressed the core issue which we believe is the need to shift the context within which all these activities occur.

Perception becomes reality: what you expect largely determines what you see (as every political campaign knows). "Controlling the message" is key. The fact is that New Jersey has historically allowed others to define her and control her public perception.

Accomplishments

What did New Jersey's first-ever *Celebrate NJ!* campaign in June, 2005 accomplish? Despite the shortness of time, personnel and resources, *Celebrate NJ!* demonstrated the following:

- That confronting NJ's negative stereotypes by showcasing New Jersey's positive contributions is a necessary first step in shifting the perception of New Jersey
- That our natural love for the place we live and work can easily be encouraged and amplified
- That New Jersey is 2nd to none, and there's no basis for 2nd class status
- That ALL states have their problems and challenges politically, economically, and otherwise, and NJ doesn't have to accept this as her defining element
- That NJ has many distinctions worthy of pride, beginning with our critical role as the turning point and frequent battleground of the American Revolution

Celebrate NJ! became a platform for bringing together all the "pieces" and showing the power of the "whole." Like New

Jersey's essential and pivotal role in the American Revolution which has long been overlooked, dividing our sectors (e.g., arts, history, environment, recreation, tourism, business, education, etc.) in competition with each other has not allowed us to see our overarching greatness. *Celebrate NJ!* 2005 demonstrated what's possible by showcasing NJ's many positives in a comprehensive and compelling way.

Public Awareness

Celebrate NJ! 2005 also began the educational process of developing widespread public awareness of information important in creating a sense of connection among New Jersey's citizens in the following ways:

- Awakened interest in and familiarity with New Jersey's state symbols (albeit NJ is still the only state that doesn't have a state song)
- Created thematic connections like New Jersey's role in the American Revolution (which involves 244 of our 566 municipalities), the charm of NJ's Victorian towns and architecture (186 of our municipalities), NJ sites involved in the Underground Railroad (involving all NJ counties except Atlantic and Bergen), NJ's famous people, NJ's innovations and contributions that changed the nation and the world, and endless lists of NJ "firsts and bests"
- Reminded ourselves of many reasons NJ has for pride and dignity (our world-class arts and artists, the strength of our cultural and ethnic diversity, our role as a transportation "crossroads," our easy access to nearly everything that's desirable and important)
- Became aware of all that we take for granted living here in New Jersey: our proximity to great food based on our abundance of fresh seafood, fruits, and vegetables; our unparalleled natural beauty (seacoast, bay shore, mountains, coastal plains, pine forests, public gardens and arboretums); the impact and importance of our citizen's character (we're hardworking, fun loving, resilient, adventuresome, innovative, generous and tenacious—and have been since Colonial times)

In short, where else, in such a small area, is there so much to do, so much diversity, so much natural beauty, so much to celebrate?!

Scope of Outreach

- Over 300 participating events and activities throughout the state (from international events like the U.S. Equestrian dressage grand prix in Peapack-Gladstone to the Blueberry Festival in Whitesbog; from lighthouse tours to art and music festivals, from motor cy-

cle runs for the turtles to symphonies, film festivals, and both Civil War and Revolutionary War reenactments (including the 225th reenactment of the Battle of Springfield).

- Development and distribution of Celebrate NJ! posters, postcards, buttons, bumper stickers, and newspaper inserts
- Development of a Celebrate NJ! website (www.CelebrateNJ.org)
- Outreach to all NJ's elected officials at the local, county, state and federal level
- Outreach to all NJ's local, county and state chambers of commerce
- Outreach at 15 conferences and events
- Media outreach via 46 newspaper articles, 7 special newspaper inserts (*Asbury Park Press*, *Courier-Post*, *Home News Tribune*, *Courier News*, *Daily Journal*, *Daily Record*, *Ocean County Observer*), 2 cable TV presentations, 2 radio shows
- Resolutions from 10% of New Jersey's 566 cities, towns and municipalities
- A Proclamation from Acting Governor Richard J. Codey declaring June, 2005 as New Jersey's first-ever Celebrate NJ! Month—and supporting resolutions from NJ's state Senate and Assembly
- \$72,000 of sponsorships and grants as well as media sponsorships from all seven of New Jersey's Gannett papers, radio stations WPST and 97.5 the Hawk, and the Somerset Patriots Minor League baseball team
- Internet access partnerships with two statewide event databases: AboutNewJersey.com and VisitNJ.org
- Strategic partnerships with 27 statewide groups

What was accomplished with extremely limited resources this year (i.e., a cash budget of just under \$60,000, 650 hours of paid staff time, 2,000+ hours of volunteer time, and \$162,902 of earned media) only scratched the surface of what's possible.

Follow-up phone analysis

We did a phone survey of 24 representative individuals to assess how they see New Jersey and to explore individual opinions and perceptions of New Jersey using both direct and projective techniques (names and organizations listed at the end of the attached Survey Results). The results validate both the ongoing need to improve New Jersey's self-image, and the potential of *Celebrate New Jersey!* month to make the critical difference. The entire survey analysis is attached following the Conclusion of this report.

Conclusion

We are willing to work tirelessly to create opportunities to showcase our great state, but *Celebrate NJ! 2006* won't happen without a clear focus of widespread grassroots support and the involvement of many, many other groups.

Though we deliberately avoided discussing New Jersey's negative stereotypes, it is essential to be mindful that an important objective was to make New Jersey's assets, not its shortcomings, its defining element. We want to look back on 2005 as the year when it became unacceptable to define New Jersey by its political problems or its traffic. We've helped to plant seeds of new pride in New Jersey's illustrious heritage. The changes in New Jersey's public image will be gradual. But it's important to make our stand and to continue beating

the drum until all New Jerseyans appreciate and applaud their state.

Everyone benefits from a more positive New Jersey self image. It's easy to take for granted what's all around us all the time, like our abundance of fresh produce and seafood, beautiful parks and arboretums, multiple recreational diversions, colorful ethnic and heritage festivals, world-class museums and theaters. *Celebrate NJ!* is a win-win strategy that's FUN and engaging. It costs relatively little and yields great benefits for everyone who participates. What no one group or sector can do singly, we can easily do together. New Jersey is second to none. Our call to arms continues to be "*Celebrate NJ!* It's a matter of pride!"

2005 CELEBRATE NJ!
An initiative of the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PHONE INTERVIEWS
Conducted between July 28 – August 17, 2005

The tremendous disparity between what our respondents say “other people think” and how the respondents see New Jersey themselves was our most startling finding. They say that others see the blemishes though they themselves recognize New Jersey’s splendor.

The Blemishes

No surprises here. Traffic congestion, urban issues, sprawl, and unsightly industrial areas were mentioned when we asked how others see New Jersey. For specifics, you may scan over the appendix at the end of this summary. It also contains quotes from individual respondents under the questions that evoked the comment.

The Splendor

Clearly, most respondents felt our diversity was the basis for our justifiable pride: a melting pot of cultures (a great deal of tolerance for beliefs, people, and lifestyle differences), gives rise to an amazing range and variety of activities and attractions all of which are daytrips from just about anywhere in the state. The beauty of our landscape (farmland, parks, forests, public gardens, waterways), and our rich cultural attractions (arts and history, especially NJ’s role in the American Revolution) were often mentioned. Many people, in remarking that there’s so much to see and do here, noted how easily we can access it – an advantage of being a small but populous state. Almost universally respondents regretted that our state’s natural beauty and the richness of our history and culture is not better recognized even within our borders.

What’s Needed Most

Respondents recognize that word of mouth—the power of a personal recommendation—carries a lot of weight in how New Jersey is perceived. To foster word of mouth, there was consensus that we must begin with ourselves, from the grass roots up through businesses, schools, citizen ambassadors, arts organizations and historical groups, service clubs, and the churches. Of all these, Chambers of Commerce got the top mention, with churches next. Government has the primary responsibility for regional and national campaigns that promote New Jersey’s diverse attractions, ease of access, and natural beauty. Government (state, county and local) was also seen as having important supporting roles, including sanctioning resolutions, campaigns like “Jersey Fresh,” and heritage days.

Our respondents wanted more public education (“highlight the hidden treasures,” “promote the fun side of New Jersey”), more emphasis on our culture and the environment (including outdoor recreational opportunities, walking and self-driving tours, and museums and festivals), and more ready access to the information for finding these things.

Obvious suggestions like more money for marketing, better signage, more collaboration among groups were joined with more novel ideas like the Governor’s declaring a Celebrate NJ! day for school assemblies, having schools and businesses promote local attractions and the year-round family opportunities that abound, and New Jersey passports.

Celebrate New Jersey a Success

While modest in scope, Celebrate NJ! was seen as a successful first step in something that’s long overdue: a focus on NJ pride with all the “positives” we have to offer. It was evident from these interviews that the very concept of a Celebrate NJ! month had provoked much thought about all that there is to be proud of in the state. Several people wondered why we have so little pride in our state, citing positive economic factors such as access to good jobs, excellent education, high quality health care. Problems such as planning challenges, over building, congested highways were mentioned. But overall the message is that we love our state and its compactness, diversity and beauty and appreciate the opportunity that Celebrate NJ! provides to “rave about ourselves.” As one person said, *“It created awareness, fun, community and caused people to get together to celebrate New Jersey positively.”*

Representing both prominent volunteers and key decision makers in business, arts, tourism, education, history, and the environment, our respondents mentioned again and again New Jersey’s favorable location, its “proximity to wonderful opportunities,” the quality of our people, and how well we get along.

A majority of our respondents felt that Celebrate NJ! could rival festivals in other states within 5 years or less with more lead time, more involvement by communities, expansion of the number of media sponsors, recruitment of celebrity spokespersons and collaboration among existing groups. As one person observed succinctly, *“I’m glad it’s finally happening!”*



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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW SURVEY ANALYSIS

2005 Celebrate New Jersey!

(an initiative of the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association)

August 22, 2005

Creating a Benchmark

In the six weeks following New Jersey's first-ever Celebrate NJ! campaign, we wanted to create a benchmark of how people see New Jersey and what they assessed would make a difference. We interviewed 24 individuals representing a cross-section of organizational stakeholders including business (3), arts/culture (5), history (2), parks/environment (3), government (4), community service/volunteers (3), education (1), and tourism (3). The questions, list of individuals interviewed, and the CNJ! coordinating organizations are attached on the last page. This was neither a random sample, nor a comprehensive survey, and the results are the subjective opinions of individuals, many of whom are opinion leaders in their area of expertise.

What We Found

We expected to find a wide array of opinions, depending on which category of interest the person represented. We asked open-ended questions and as much as possible tried to allow each person's response to speak for itself. The results were astonishingly similar across categories of age, sex, background, or any other measure. Here are our results.

CATEGORY 1: NJ's IMAGE

Question 1: My first topic is New Jersey's image. What do you imagine most people think of when they picture New Jersey?

Again and again, people told us that "most other people" think New Jersey is ugly, congested and corrupt. References like "it's crowded," "what exit?!", "oil refineries and trashy stuff around Newark Airport and Atlantic City," "no idea why New Jersey is called the 'Garden State'," "an industrial landscape [a grittiness about NJ]," "the Sopranos Mafia image," "God! You live there?!", "long term jokes," "no internal pride," "scandals, jokes about the NJ Turnpike, pollution [New York's dumping ground]," "corruption—because of the press NJ gets—negative image gets overstated," and "initially, when people are transferred here, no one wants to come" were comments we heard again and again. "

Question 2: How does this compare with your personal image of New Jersey?

This may be the most significant finding: a tremendous disparity between what people think "other people think" and how people think themselves. Respondents said they felt New Jersey was "community oriented with hardworking, generous people," "convenient [to NYC, Philly, Baltimore, DC]" "diverse (and crowded) in both population and topography," "gorgeous farmlands, Pine Barrens, small towns," "splendid

place to live,” “I love the woods and trees here, especially the oaks and maples!” “we were the Crossroads of the American Revolution, the birthplace of the American film industry, an important economic center,” “great sports teams to see, the Shore, Atlantic City, great health care,” “beautiful, arts, fall foliage, awesome,” “canals, mountains, lakes and historic sites,” “great place to raise a family,” “includes the Shore, arts, culture, American Revolution,” “depends, at the Shore, if you pick the right places; if you’re a resident, you know there are a lot of rural areas,” and one person who said there are “too many municipalities, school districts, turf issues—otherwise New Jersey seems pretty good.” One person said, “Before I came here, I used to think it was pretty corrupt, with refineries and lousy smells along the Turnpike. Once here, I saw secret, gorgeous places.” And another said, “New Jersey is much more varied than people think. In various ways we heard, “People here are more tolerant, progressive, respectful of others.” “People have no idea of its complexity and the pretty, agricultural parts.” Several people wondered why we have so little pride in our state. One said, “I love NJ—it gets under your skin!”

Question 3: If you were asked to name three things about New Jersey you are proud of, what comes to mind?

NOTE: Responses listed in order as responded; Number of responses (in brackets):

1st responses:

- NJ’s history, especially American Revolution (5)
- Diversity (4) [“a melting pot of cultures”]
Note: One person said, “As corrupt as politics can be [in NJ], 85% of the issues come around to doing the right thing. We stand our ground as an in-between space between NY and Philadelphia. Our citizens have a great deal of pride when we represent NJ to out-of-state people. And we’re proud of our environment and being an environmentally conscious state.”
- NJ’s cultural attractions—arts and history (3)
- NJ’s educational system (2)
- NJ Shore (2)
- Giants (1)
- Cosmopolitan (1)
- Beautiful scenery (1)
- Access to health care and top doctors (1)
- NJ Pine Barrens (1)
- NJ’s people [“most of them!”] (1)

2nd responses:

- “Beauty of countryside,” “Beautiful landscapes and variety of geographic features,” “Environmental diversity” (6)
- NJ’s history, museums and culture (3)
- Diversity of population (2)
- Location (2) [“Excellent commute into NYC,” “access in Northeast is perfect”]

- Great education (1)
- Fresh, farm produce (1)
- D & R Canal State Park (1)
- Pride of people who live here (1)
- Access to arts, history, cities, commerce (1)
- NJ’s role in American film community (1)
- Jersey Shore (1)
- Thomas Edison National Historic site (1)
- NJ’s creativity, forward thinking people & institutions (1)
- Open space preservation (1)

3rd responses:

- “Beauty of state,” “variety of geography” (3)
- “Proximity to wonderful opportunities,” “access to big cities,” “ease of getting to other places, compactness, wide diversity” (3)
- “Something for everyone,” “Variety of things to do,” “the people who live here—the way they care for each other,” “Quality of life issues [care for the arts and history]” (3)
- Great deal of tolerance for beliefs, people and lifestyle differences (3)
- “Quality of corporate community,” “Good paying jobs” (2)
- NJ’s cultural assets—arts and history (2)
- Revolutionary War history (1)
- Jersey Shore & water based recreation (2)
- “Not just a one season, one location state” (1)
- NJ’s state forests (1)
- NJ agriculture (1)
- Grounds for Sculpture park in Hamilton Twn. (J. Seward Johnson, Jr.) (1)
- Quality of schools (“quite good compared to other states”) (1)
- Diversity of people (1)
- New Jersey “firsts” (1)

Question 4: How about three things that you’re not proud of about New Jersey?

NOTE: Responses listed in order as responded; Number of responses (in brackets):

1st responses:

- Political corruption (13) [“Corruption that gave everyone in NJ politics a black eye,” “We’ve had a rough political time—hurts our image somewhat”]
- Home rule (2) [“Home rule and its contribution to fiscal irresponsibility,” “Seeming inability of communities and governments to work together—protectiveness of turf”]
- Traffic congestion [“Turnpike and Parkway traffic is hideous”] (2)

- Self-image (2) [“State’s leaders don’t play up the positive aspects of NJ,” “NJ has an inferiority complex”]
- Property taxes (1)
- Insufficient state support for NJ’s history (1)
- Environmental pollution [“Superfund sites”] (1)
- “Co-generation plant from Turnpike” (1)
- 101.5 radio (1)

2nd responses:

- Political corruption and scandals (6) [“Not as widespread as people think, but it puts NJ in a bad light,” “Corruption in big cities,” “Cities, esp. Newark and Camden,” “Negative reputation for political corruption,” “Corruption is endemic, e.g., the UMDNJ issue recently”]
- Traffic jams on major roadways (2)
- High taxes (2)
- Environmental pollution/toxic waste (2)
- Media portrayal of NJ (2) [“The way the papers nationally portray NJ unfairly—Asbury Park Press is a major perpetrator,” “We’re not portrayed as well as we could be in the media.”]
- Appearance (2) [“Many sections of the state are physically ugly,” “Condition of the major cities still needs a lot of work to provide decent quality of life, esp. Newark, Camden and Atlantic City”]
- “Naming NJ Turnpike rest stops after famous people is not the way to honor them” (1)
- “Unattractive gateways to the state” (1)
- Education (“Paying the most money for mediocre performance: 26th in achievement but I pay 1 ½ times for education”) (1)
- “Elitism” (1)
- Lack of self-pride (1) [“NJ never fights for what’s ours—we’re not one state.”]

3rd responses:

- Self-image (7) [“No respect from New Yorkers,” “Poor, undeserved reputation,” “‘What exit?’ on Turnpike—that we’re a channel instead of an entity,” “What Brooklyn was to comedians, NJ is today,” “People think we’re like the Sopranos,” “Our name shows up negatively in news, politics, and corruption”]
- Environmental pollution: “Waste—dumps that are a blight; too much building and not enough conservation” (3)
- NJ cities (3) [“Poor condition of NJ’s cities,” “Cities are in bad shape, but improving somewhat”]
- Congested highways (2)
- Political system (2) [“NJ’s political system seems to foster inequity”]

- Racial discrimination (“2nd largest achievement gap in the country between minorities and whites”) (1)
- Crime (1)
- Eminent domain issue (1) [“Legislators and court system are out of control”]
- “High prices of housing, taxes, etc.” (1)
- “We don’t honor people properly” (1)
- Lack of state support for state-owned historic sites (1)
- “Economic desperation vs. great affluence” (1)
- “Politicians lack vision and a spirit of cooperation” (1)
- “Lack of cleanliness everywhere” (1)

CATEGORY 2: IMPROVING NEW JERSEY’S IMAGE

Question 5: What should groups like the Chamber of Commerce or the state tourism authorities be doing to improve New Jersey’s public image?

A significant number of respondents said we should focus on the positives about New Jersey. Ideas for how to do this fell into three categories: 1) improve New Jersey’s public image (e.g., stop “pay for play” lobbying, combine the 640 school boards [Chambers can play a major role in this], clean up political scandals, improve the appearance of the NJ Turnpike [our most visible access to NJ]), 2) make ALL of us ambassadors for the state (e.g., reach out into schools, businesses, shopping center kiosks, *Celebrate NJ!* campaign) and 3) market our state’s diversity and its many “positives” (promoting not only the Shore but also the our historic heritage, the arts, small towns, skiing, fishing, scenic highways, the Delaware Bay, the canals and waterways, mountains, state parks, bike trails. Comments underscoring this 3rd point were as follows:

- “Take the negative ‘What exit?’ question and turn it into a positive ad campaign,”
- “ ‘Perfect together’ ads made a difference marketing all of New Jersey’s regions,”
- “Work with local organizations to promote the history and benefits of NJ—there’s a direct link between art and commerce,”
- “Highlight the hidden treasures of New Jersey with colorful, bright ads,” “Promote the fun side of New Jersey!”
- “We need more TV ads, more welcome centers, (e.g., I-78 has no welcome center),” “We have wonderful resources! We don’t rave about ourselves.”

- “We lack signage for historic and arts sites [like the food and gas signs] with further signage to get you from the highway to the site.”
- “Seek all money possible for increased ads, billboards, visibility on the Turnpike and Parkway.”
- “Chambers of Commerce shape New Jersey’s image to attract more businesses and should collaborate more with each other and similar organizations to generate key message points to be consistent through any campaign.”
- “Chambers should promote partnerships with arts, history, tourism (including some money expended).”
- “Let’s work together and stop dividing the state up into counties, towns, tourism regions. Let’s look at New Jersey wholistically and break it down into wider categories.”
- “Each group talks to itself too much. We need to be at everyone’s table to learn and share information.”
- “We need overall branding of New Jersey.”
- “Promote spring and fall vacations and NJ’s cultural diversity.”
- “Fire the [state tourism] advertising agent for comparing the Jersey Shore to a \$10 movie night—should have been a Florida vacation vs. NJ Shore!”
- “Put up prominent welcome signs. Show a sense of pride, e.g., sports teams should be NJ based and change their logos”
- “Tourism needs to focus attention on more than Atlantic City and the Shore; we’re completely missing marketing our forests, open spaces and heritage areas”
- “The state [tourism leaders] need to devote much more resources to shore up organizations and marketing to coordinate efforts around a clear, well-marketed, articulate message about all of NJ’s treasures.”

Question 6: When you think of cultural, heritage tourism in New Jersey, what comes to mind as a tourist attraction?

Museums, Living History Museums, Theaters

- MAC/Cape May (6)
- Historic Cold Spring Village (3)
- NJ Performing Arts Center in Newark (3)
- Museums (3) [specifically mentioned were Newark(2), Zimmerlee, Noyes]
- Ellis Island/Statue of Liberty (3)
- Liberty Science Center (2)
- Liberty State Park (2)
- Newark Museum (2)
- Edison’s Labs (2)
- Thomas Edison’s home (2)
- Wheaton Village (2)

- Pinelands, South Jersey, WheatonVillage glassblowing (1)
- Theaters (2) [specifically mentioned were McCarter, PaperMill Playhouse]
- NJ Aquarium in Camden (1)
- Waterloo Village (1)
- Hopewell Village (1)
- Howell Living History Farm (1)
- Lucy the Elephant (1)
- Peter’s Valley (1) (continued)
- Wonderful museums for adults (2) [“art museums or museums for industries we’ve lost but have museums like the silk factories in Patterson, farm museums in Morris County, Flanders Field, county facilities and parks”]

World War II

- Battleship New Jersey (2)
- Naval Air Station (1)
- Tall Ships (1)

History

- Revolutionary War sites (8) [specifically mentioned were Old Barracks, Rockingham, Washington Crossing Park; battlefields; “People have been working hard to create a Revolutionary Trail through NJ. Trenton has shown support for this. This can only benefit us.”]
- Morristown Natl. Historic Park & Jockey Hollow (7)
- Drumthwacket, Morven and Princeton area (5)
- The Old Barracks in Trenton (4)
- Washington Crossing State Park (3)
- Washington’s Headquarters (3)
- Rockingham (2)
- Trenton (2) [“Trenton is struggling to reinvent small, back road pockets of history.”]
- Monmouth Battlefield (2)
- Colonial history (2)
- Crossroads of the American Revolution (1) [“We don’t promote it at all.”]
- Tempe Wyck (1)
- Liberty Hall, Union Co. (1)
- African American Heritage Trail (1)
- Civil War relationship (1)
- Union County’s 4 Centuries in a Weekend (1)
- Historic sites (1)
- Ft. Lee movie industry (1)

Towns, parks & landscapes

- State Capitol (1)
- Ironbound Newark (1)
- Lambertville/New Hope (1) [“Lambertville/New Hope cooperate and share tourists.”]
- Freehold, Holmdel, Middletown (in Monmouth Co.) restored homes, museums, the arts center and conser-

vatory are wonderful assets showing how NJ became what it is (1)

- NJ lighthouses (1)
- NJ Shore (1)
- Princeton University (1)
- Morristown (1)
- North Central Jersey state parks (“Lovely, though they need work.”)

Question 7: Are there assets in New Jersey that are under-developed or not well enough known (e.g., things to see and do, attractions, events)?

- Historic structures, sites, landscapes and battlefields (6) [“Some of the smaller historic sites compete instead of working together.” “NJ could be VA, PA or NY if it didn’t have its inferiority complex.” “If you look at Valley Forge or the Boston Freedom Trail—they don’t have half of what we have in NJ. NJ needs walking/driving tours like Savannah.”]
- NJ’s state parks and historic sites (4) [“You have to pay for everything here. In PA, the parks are free.” “NJ sites haven’t received the funding, promotion and maintenance.” “Amount of funding available to history organizations is miniscule compared to the arts.”]
- NJ’s outdoor activities (4) (e.g., hiking, biking, canoeing) [“It’s piecemeal—there’s no well developed network of information”]
- Minor league baseball (3)
- NJ’s Revolutionary War sites (2) [“There were no banners or billboards put up to commemorate 225th battles”]
- Beauty of NJ’s countryside (2) [e.g., Skylands,, Canals]
- New Jersey’s accessibility (2)
- Cultural festivals (e.g., ethnic, farm, heritage) (2)
- NJ PAC, Newark Museum (2) [“Even well developed places in NJ like these don’t have ample marketing budgets and support.”]
- Grounds for Sculpture (2)
- Non-shore tourism generally (2) [“Culture, arts & history need opportunities to build infrastructure, planning for institutionalizing and maintaining sites; making sure they are strong allows them to be strong...for the state’s overall image and to give back to the state—a strategic use of funds.”]
- NJ’s theaters (2) [“We have wonderful gems, not well enough known.” “In the shadow of NY—not enough promotion”]
- “Garden State” image (1)
- Beauty of NJ’s shore (1)
- NJ Festival of Ballooning (1)
- Liberty Science Center (1)

- Liberty State Park (1)
- County parks and arboretums (1)
- Palisades Park (1)
- Hudson River waterfront (1) [“We need to get the Riverwalk—George Washington Bridge to Jersey City—completed.”]
- Patriot’s Week (1) [“Almost any attraction NOT at the Shore or Atlantic City is under marketed and under utilized.”]
- Wheaton Village, Pinelands (1)
- Keansburg, Asbury Park (1) [“We don’t promote NJ to New Jersey. There’s lots of family stuff to do all seasons.”]
- Noyes Museum (1)
- Free jazz concerts in Camden and Atlantic City (1)
- Walt Whitman House (1)
- Ocean City Historic Museum (1)
- Haddonfield Symphony (1)
- Oceanville (1)
- Chickenbone Beach Foundation (1)

Question 8: How do you think our cultural heritage relates to New Jersey’s public image?

- Not connected in NJ (9)
 - “People don’t think about it at all.”
 - “Not in the forefront of people’s minds: they’re looking for good jobs, homes, schools—not concerned with heritage.”
 - “People don’t think of history and culture and NJ. They think of gambling, the Shore or highways.”
 - “Kids learn about it in the 4th grade and there’s no follow up beyond that.”
 - “We’re all separate little counties, not one big state.”
 - “Talk radio, the Sopranos, crooked politicians become our image.”
 - “The challenge is to redefine NJ’s public image. When the politicians are fighting to be the most controversial, it’s hard for people to recognize what’s important.”
 - “It’s not promoted, so people think there’s nothing worthwhile here.”
- Connected somewhat (12)
 - “It should be! It gets lost on people who don’t live here or grow up here. The connection would help our image.”
 - “There’s a ‘disconnect’ right now between public image and what our cultural heritage truly is. We’re not educated about our toler-

ance and resilience regarding immigration and cultural diversity.”

- “Maybe people don’t know there’s Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Ukranian heritage in NJ and a wider melting pot than NYC.”
 - “If there were more awareness of NJ’s cultural heritage, there would be a different outlook on NJ.”
 - “We don’t do anything like the Boston Freedom Trail.”
 - “The fact that attractions are underdeveloped and under-marketed ties in with problems with our statewide image. If we had budgets to do national marketing it would give millions of people a different image of NJ.”
 - “If it were more strongly related, it would help counter-balance perceived negativity.”
 - “It’s under-utilized and not that well known.”
 - “It could elevate our public image if we were ever able to capitalize on it. Look at Philly, Boston, PA. NJ has Woodrow Wilson, Charles Lindberg, etc.”
 - “From the inside, people are knowledgeable and proud of our cultural heritage. Outside very few people know of NJ’s place in the American Revolution and Industrial Revolution.”
- Absolutely clear connection (4)
 - “We have a lot to celebrate in our history—famous people and events that happened here.”
 - “There’s a strong connection but it’s not promoted well enough. Destinations are not promoted collaboratively and there’s a lack of understanding of what there is to do outside of the Shore.”
 - “It’s a very important component of NJ’s public image—a lot of work has to be done to make it visible.”
 - “Other states—VA, PA, MA, NC—are much better at using it to promote the image of their states.”
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CATEGORY 3: HOW INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING NEW JERSEY’S IMAGE

Question 9: Do you think that individuals influence how people see New Jersey, e.g., word-of-mouth?

Almost every respondent indicated ways they felt individuals can make a difference. There was a clear consensus that word-of-mouth is incredibly valuable, sometimes more valuable than other, more expensive ways of promotion. Collaboration and not being so territorial in various sectors is key (e.g., connecting cultural heritage tourism to quality of life issues and business opportunities) as well as being gracious and welcoming to our visitors. Ideas ranged from talking to people when traveling, having Division of Tourism packets for new families moving in or new registrants in schools, “Welcome Wagon” items that promote the state, create a jingle or catchy slogan, merchant and business promotions, website and signage, media coverage, make public venues more beautiful and logos more positive, a citizen’s campaign (e.g., like getting people to vote).

Some of the comments were: “We can be ambassadors for our state.” “Talk to people every chance you have about all the positive things. Object when people make negative comments.” “Talk with your family and friends and bring them along to things you’re going to.” “Word of mouth is the best recommendation. People get into habits and don’t venture out unless someone tells them about it.” “The only way to enlist individuals is to get them out to experience the positives and share it.” “We need to educate the media. Discover NJ Arts did this well. Working together we can leverage our resources.” “Celebrities are the best spokespeople for this purpose.” “Recommendations are so powerful.” “We need to be emissaries for our own story.”

People felt NJ’s history, arts and natural beauty are unknown or under-acknowledged publicly, [“It’s annoying to go to Newark Airport and NJ rest stops and not see New Jersey promoted.” “It’s difficult to get a focused idea of what NJ is—too much competition among regional tourism areas.” “We should take seriously how we represent our state to others.” “When people visit, there’s so many things to pick and choose from.”]—although one respondent argued for his right to “knock it as well as talking about the good stuff.”

Question 10: What community groups or activities have the potential for shaping the public image of New Jersey?

- Chambers- local, county, state (7)
- Churches (5) [“Churches can create trips, concerts to promote New Jersey pride.”

- Rotary and other service clubs (4)
- Media (3) ["Newspapers could do more positive press, more regular coverage of events," "NJ's role in creating the movie industry connects to young people," "Star Ledger does a good job. Gannett spends too much time digging dirt—too much focus on negative news."]
- Celebrate NJ! (4) "Our Governor could designate a Celebrate NJ! Day for the schools to have assemblies to learn about NJ." "Celebrate NJ! has potential—Art Pride, Arts Council and Historical Commission fund and support other organizations" "Cross-market North Jersey and South Jersey to each other"]
- Historic societies (3)
- Festivals (e.g., Red Bank, Cape May, Jazz & blues, food) (3) ["Capitalize on some of the locally organized events—more authentic that way: real events by real people." "Festivals reach out to diverse communities."]
- Youth based community groups (3)
- State government (3)
- Town councils (3)
- State campaigns like "Jersey Fresh" (2) ["The state can help brand and resonate with national and international audiences." "We have beautiful natural areas that should be emphasized. Businesses and groups representing farmers should publicize more." "Tourism Dept. should emphasize what's good about New Jersey."]
- Recreation groups (1)
- League of Women Voters (1)
- Businesses (1) ["Strong corporate presence is important"]
- United Ways (1)
- Travel agencies (1)
- Mayors (1)
- PTO's (1)
- Universities (1)
- Heritage Days (e.g., Pioneer, American Revolution, Industrial Revolution) (1)
- Family reunions (1)
- Perceived decision makers in any field (1)
- Arts community (2)
- State parks and "Friends" groups (2) ["Need funding to improve sites and to market competitively in a regional or national market."]
- Museums (1)
- Tourism regional boards (1) "The reach from Trenton stops at Monmouth County. There's very little outreach from Trenton to the Edison site. North Jersey feels like the '5th county of NY.'" "The state tourism bureau needs to promote local tourism to us. Highlight what's here—it's hard to find information on things like local B & Bs."
- Environmental groups (e.g., eco-tourism) (1)

- Large associations (1) (e.g., NJAM, History Advocates, NJ League of Municipalities) ["Collaborations to work together—one positive message is always key—tapping into resources around the state."]
- Schools and teachers (1) [e.g., "Promote NJ attractions instead of Valley Forge"]

Bottom line: "New Jerseyans need to do a better job educating ourselves and participating in our own state's attractions." "We need some forum for organizations to have a strong voice to influence decision makers when it comes to branding NJ—not NJ Tourism, DEP or DOT—but a non-profit, independent group to fill this role." "We need a focused, well thought-out strategy."

Question 11: The Celebrate NJ! initiative was a grassroots movement involving individuals and groups throughout the state. Over 300 activities were designated Celebrate NJ! events resulting in over \$150,000 of newspaper publicity in addition to cable TV and radio.

(A) Do you think this modest effort had a positive effect?

Yes, absolutely (17)

- "It created awareness, fun, community and caused people to get together to celebrate NJ positively."
- "Everyone has to start somewhere—not unlike "First Night" celebrations. Then they take off and become expected. The issue is resources and getting people involved."
- "A very effective use of funding—you should be proud."
- "It was a good start. I hope it will become a tradition. Not sure if it needs a whole month—a shorter time might intensify it."
- "It ignited a conversation that needed to be had—but it had too little funding to be considered a movement."
- "Come up with compliments to dispel negative comments."
- "Didn't hear anything negative about the program itself."
- "The Mayor of my town called to find out what was happening in his town—got them to notice." ["How do we get the NJ League of Municipalities to tell the mayors to declare this?"]
- "This is an arts and economic movement—any money spent wisely will get a good return for the money spent."
- "Impressive as a start," "A laudable effort"

Somewhat (2)

- “Any effort has an affect—probably small.”
- “Hard to tell but people were aware and interested”
- “Didn’t see it in the press—only through the letter to the Township. It wasn’t on 101.5. But our town thought it was terrific.”

Not much effect (3)

- “If I didn’t receive emails and wasn’t part of governor’s conferences, I’m not sure I would have been aware of it.”

(B) What do you think its potential is if expanded in the future?

To become more effective, respondents told us we would need to have more lead time, include more communities, expand the number of media sponsors, keep the positive tone (“no whining!”), pool resources and collaborate more with existing groups, use celebrities as spokespersons (e.g., Springsteen, Bon Jovi), keep the Passport idea and get it into the school system, focus on how Celebrate NJ! benefits the individual (“What’s in it for me?”). One person said, “I don’t think of it as a festival—more a marketing campaign that promotes the state. A festival is an event.” Another felt State tourism should take it on. Another suggested that we look for non-traditional methods [so we don’t end up preaching to the choir] and focus on particular market segments. We also heard the importance of organizations working together towards a common goal and providing promotional support for smaller groups.

(C) How many years do you think it would take to establish Celebrate NJ! as a festival rivaling those of other states?

- 5 years or less (13)—many said 3 years or less!
 - “People like happy things,” “Have to promote pride in New Jerseyans!”
- 6-10 years (8)
- Over 10 years (1)
- Don’t know (1)
- “I applaud Marguerite for going after this. She’s tenacious. Hopefully it’s time well spent. You did a good job of logo development. For a first year, spectacular!”
- “There’s interest on the part of state government to improve cultural tourism. Both the NJ Assembly and Senate are working on it now. It’s a great time to work on a Celebrate NJ! campaign.”
- “Variety of NJ in such a small place should be promoted—it would make us a more popular tourism destination. There are many vacation opportunities.”
- “Glad it’s finally happening!”
- “The key is education of the public. Reach out through schools, especially principals and the National Association of Principals and Supervisors.

Promote all aspects of the state, and stop being the butt of jokes. Got to get advertisements out there and have them last a long time to make an impact.”

- “There’s so much here. Get a taste of it all—all four seasons! Maybe a slogan like “If you can live in NJ, you can live anywhere. We have a little of everything here.”
- “NJ is different from some states. We have the Mason/Dixon line North/South differences--we need to start erasing that. We need a concentrated effort to work together to promote the entire state.”
- “When I came here there were a lot of myths. I had to find out on my own what made it so great. We need to break through the sick-myth and determine why we are celebrating New Jersey.”
- “Celebrate NJ! is a great initiative. I’m glad it got started and anxious to see it continue to grow.”
- “We need more education going forward. If the Boards of Education could be brought in earlier, it would be more effective. Parents will be led by their kids.”
- “Wish we’d had materials earlier to distribute.”
- “Fractional, solo-oriented NJ works to our enormous detriment. Our government should adopt the best practices of other states.”
- “Is it worth it to be a whole month or is it a weekend? Celebrate NJ! should be a shorter time-frame.”
- “There’s an inherent lack of communication between Arts and History. How do we fix that? How do we become better tourism partners? We work differently—a ‘bunker mentality’—and compete for dollars on a state and national scale as well. I have trouble making distinction between ‘heritage’ and ‘cultural heritage’ tourism. The links for Celebrate NJ! need to be better next year with the Arts—and improve your website to get us working together the right way.”
- “Groups need to work together starting at the center of the circle and work their way out. Good that Celebrate NJ! was focused on residents of NJ.”
- “NJ is such a treasure. We have to break down barriers to collaboration and overcome the paradigm shift from legislators to individuals to business to non-profits. Together we can enhance the quality of life in New Jersey. Unbridled build up is putting us at risk—a threat to NJ’s future. Lack of intelligent planning is an issue.”

Question 12: Is there anything else you’d like to tell me that I didn’t think to ask you?

- “What’s missing in NJ? What stands out? We have no unique, positive identifier.”
- “Too much feudalism, competition—we don’t work together to bring people into the state. We need to

change how our own residents feel about ourselves. Then we can worry about outside perception.”

- “CNJ! 2005 was comprised of sound, appropriate agencies but lacked a significant spokesperson for the event that could have generated more media interest.

CNJ! needs a celebrity or other leader to endorse it, i.e., Tom Kean commercials.”

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Coordinating Committee 2005 Celebrate NJ!

AboutNewJersey.com
 Advocates for New Jersey History
 Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
 (ANJEC)
 ArtPride New Jersey
 Association of New Jersey County Cultural & Heritage
 Agencies
 Crossroads of the American Revolution Association
 Delaware & Raritan Greenway
 Greater Camden Partnership
 MidAtlantic Center for the Arts
 New Jersey Chamber of Commerce
 New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail
 New Jersey Conservation Foundation

New Jersey Cultural Trust
 New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,
 Natural & Historic Resources
 New Jersey Historical Commission
 New Jersey League of Municipalities
 New Jersey Association of Museums
 New Jersey Parks & Recreation Association
 New Jersey Office of Travel & Tourism
 New Jersey Network Radio & TV
 New Jersey Travel Industry Association
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 South Jersey Cultural Alliance
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