

Tourism, Inc. begun as a vision to help Carlisle grow

By Pam Howles
of the News Service

CARLISLE — Nicholas County Tourism, Inc. was started with a vision comparing Carlisle to other small towns which was able to grow with tourism.

Gladys Shroat and John Metzger realized Carlisle had so many houses on the national register this would be a good start for tourism in the community.

A small town very similar to Carlisle with a main street like our own was where Shroat came up with the thought this could possibly work for Carlisle.

The streets were flooded with antique shops and other businesses where people were shopping.

The tourism organization and the chamber of commerce were where it all began in this community.

All the towns Shroat had visited all had a visitor center, so this is the place the organization had to start.

Shroat learned the City of Carlisle had leased the jail from the Nicholas County Fiscal Court.

Nicholas County Judge-Executive Reese Smoot felt Shroat should look at the jail before making any decision.

The first look at the jail showed there was a long road ahead before a visitor's center would be in Carlisle.

The roof had blown off and water damage had caused mold spores on the walls and ceilings. The paneling had drawn moisture and the plaster had fallen off the wall.

Shroat and Metzger sought advice from Frankfort to see what type of grants might be available and what applications needed to be filled to begin the project.

"We knew from the beginning it was not going to happen overnight and everyone has to be patient," Shroat said.

Last year the tourism group received \$3,500 from the Heritage Council, \$7,500 from the

Kentucky Bicentennial, \$1,000 Nicholas County Fiscal Court, \$5,000 from Carlisle City Council, and approximately \$10,000 worth of free labor from the National Guard and other concerned citizens.

The tourism organization also received money from a special grant. Nicholas County was one of only seven counties in the state to be able

to divide \$27,000 of grant money in Kentucky.

The state allocates the money for these grants. It might as well come back home than go to some other county," Shroat said.

None F. Ronck III a local architect, who owns a house on Lake Carnon, was hired to help to fill out the applications and drafts shops throughout the jail. This will include applications in person to visiting shops in the jail cells.

The old dungeon in the basement has been a tourist attraction to many of the people who have come.

There are several writing and drawings on the walls in the dungeon and in the jail cells. Shroat is not sure how long some of the drawings have been there.

The front room, which used to be the living room will be used as a visitors center. Other rooms could be used as meeting and special event rooms.

A program is planned to have a tour bus come from Paris to Carlisle then on to the Washington in Masson floor two rooms are almost

totally finished along with the hall and the stairwell to the upstairs. On the second floor two rooms are almost finished.

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The Canon Henry Pan-Beats Photo. Above, entrance to an old jail cell in the ground level section. Below, left, a drawing from the dungeon, and below right is a billboard sign from the C.C. Cole Co., donated to Tourism, Inc. to place in the visitor's center.



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Published in The Carlisle Mercury, Thursday, July 11, 1991



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