In late 2010, an Archway Partnership intern from UGA's Institute for Non-Profit Organizations wrote, and the community received, the Tourism Product Development Grant from the Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Division. The grant provided funding for construction and upgrades to the Genealogy Research Center and the Old Jail Museum. Shortly after, the City of Sandersville and the Washington County Historical Society partnered to create seven part-time staff positions, allowing the Historical Society to open the doors of local museums four days a week. Previously most of the museums were open on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.

To promote the local museums' newly-funded hours of operation, the Historical Society enlisted the help of an Archway Partnership graphic design intern to create an informational and visibly appealing brochure. The brochure, which highlights popular historical sites and details the county’s historical significance, will be distributed in Welcome Centers statewide.

"We are sure to have a brochure that stands out to attract visitors to our county... It sets the bar for other brochures," said Layne Kitchens, president of the Washington County Historical Society.

Graphic design and journalism interns from Archway also assisted in creating promotional material for this year’s First Annual Sherman’s Trail Yard Sale. Spanning rural communities between Atlanta and Savannah, the yard sale was fashioned as an opportunity for local businesses and vendors to attract statewide travelers. Over 20 towns along the trail joined the City of Sandersville, the City of Tennille, and the City of Davisboro — all located in Washington County — for the yard sale, held May 7-8, 2011.

Prior to the yard sale, the Archway Partnership Tourism Work Group planned a promotional campaign including a recognizable logo design, brochures for buyers and sellers, post cards and event website. All print items were designed so that each participating community could customize them to their town’s specific needs to ensure a highly recognizable Sherman’s Trail brand. On the first morning of the sale, posters and signs boasting the logo guided yard-salers along the path.

In Davisboro, Sandersville, and Tennille, there were over 1,000 visitors for the weekend, many of which stayed in local hotels, dined in local restaurants and took time to appreciate the towns’ historic heritage. Travelers from over 15 Georgia towns, Louisiana and South Carolina signed the guest books in Washington County alone. “Traffic came through that wouldn’t have come if it hadn’t been for the yard sale,” said Susan Lewis, one of the local coordinators.

In Sandersville, the return on investment was more than one visitor per every dollar spent. The success was echoed for surrounding towns such as Covington, Locust Grove, and Bartow, who reported 55 visitors to their local museum for the weekend, an exceptional turnout.

Advancing Community Priorities: With tourism as a major priority, local groups have recently made efforts to promote the community’s historic assets by utilizing resources made available from the University of Georgia through the Archway Partnership. A countywide historic brochure will ensure visibility of the county’s historic destinations. Likewise, Sherman’s Trail Yard Sale is poised to be a statewide, yearly event and its origin can be claimed in Washington County.