Pioneer Village Signage
Written by: Maggie McGruther and Sharon Liggett

In June 2013, the River Valley Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Product Development Team met with the City of Andersonville and the Andersonville Guild, to create a Tourism Product Development Study.

One of the team’s recommendations was to have a concerted, focused effort on the development of appropriate signage placed at all three levels: highway, entranceway, and gateway. Presently, the traveling public is not aware that Andersonville is more than a National Historic Site and Prisoner of War Museum. Carefully designed, uniform, way-finding signage will help to draw traffic into and around the historic downtown and thus direct visitors to attractions such as the Pioneer Farm.

In March 2014, the Archway Partnership collaborated with the Andersonville Guild and the Americus-Sumter Tourism Council to address the recommendations in the above study. Signage in the Pioneer Village was selected as a starting point. The Village was in need of this signage to identify its existence, location, facilities, and interpretation. The Village represents the 1860s era so signage needed to be historically appropriate and consistent. The College of Environmental Design provided design drawings creating a cohesive plan. In addition to the design drawings, construction drawings were developed for the manufacture and installation of the signage.

As a possible implementation strategy, the packaged project was presented to the Eagle Scout Board of Review for consideration. The Board approved the project because it was well planned and associated with the quality work of the University of Georgia. In August 2014, a local Eagle Scout Candidate coordinated and executed the necessary work of creating and installing directional signage within the Pioneer Village. The candidate also committed to doing the same for the building signage.

The Archway Partnership process brought the Andersonville Guild and the Americus-Sumter County Tourism Council together to help meet a challenge of directional signage in Andersonville’s Pioneer Farm. In collaboration with the Boy Scouts of America this project was completed as an Eagle Scout Service Project. “Archway has helped the Andersonville Guild look at the City of Andersonville’s signage with fresh eyes,” says Cynthia Stormcaller of the Andersonville Guild. “Now they can keep on moving forward with better signage which will help boost the economy in the small rural community of Andersonville.”

Marketing the successes of this project, additional undertakings will include appropriate signage for highways, downtown entranceways, and city gateways utilizing the same design elements to enhance the visitors’ experience and sense of place.

Advancing Community Priorities
Addressing the needs identified within the 2013 findings of the Tourism Product Development Study for the City of Andersonville fit perfectly within Sumter County’s community priorities, which include community-wide economic development. The plans to enhance visitor experience through increased tourism product development will enhance the local economy.