



# Huerfano County, Colorado

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## CASE STUDY:

Using Mobile Audio Tours to Drive Tourism, Boost Spending & Share Local Stories

## IMPACT & RESULTS

4

TOURS LAUNCHED  
(1 driving + 3 walking)

9-19%

GROWTH  
Across  
tourism categories



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
Local experts and historians  
contributed content



REPUTATION  
Rave reviews from  
visitors and businesses

## BACKGROUND

Located in southern Colorado, Huerfano County attracts visitors with dramatic landscapes, rich cultural history, and authentic small-town charm—from the Spanish Peaks to scenic byways and vibrant arts communities.

## THE CHALLENGE

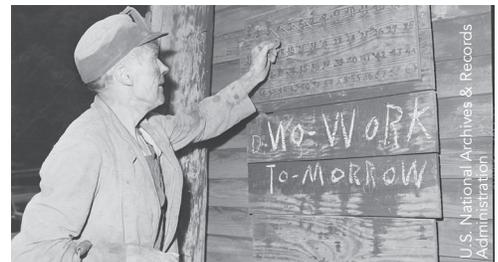
In 2017, the Huerfano County Tourism Board aimed to:

- Highlight local heritage, culture, and landscapes
- Encourage longer stays and higher visitor spending
- Position the county as a tech-savvy, accessible destination

## THE SOLUTION

Partnering with TravelStoriesGPS, the board launched GPS-triggered mobile audio tours that:

- Play automatically on visitors' phones along drives or walks
- Feature local voices and professional narration
- Include interactive maps, text, and images
- Are accessible on-site and remotely via the free TravelStories™ app



## Flagship Launch: Highway of Legends Driving Tour

The scenic byway tour highlights:

- Native American, Spanish, and immigrant history
- Geological landmarks and cultural points
- Community-sourced storytelling

Promotion included print and digital campaigns, social media outreach, local business recommendations, and roadside billboards.



“We expected to have to start from scratch and were thrilled to discover TravelStorysGPS.”

— Sarah Jardis, Chair,  
Huerfano Co. Tourism Bd.

## Expansion: Walking Tours in Three Towns

Following strong community response, Huerfano County created walking tours in:

- Walsenburg: Historic downtown and cultural roots
- La Veta: Arts, history, and natural beauty
- Cuchara: Alpine village charm

These tours involved community content creation with TravelStorysGPS guidance, deepening authenticity.

“Instead of doing what everyone else is doing, we want to reach into the future and become a trendsetter.”

— Carl Young, Director of Tourism

“That was awesome! The tour makes the drive mean more. It’s essentially a year-round museum.”

— Local Visitor

## BROADENING AUDIENCES

- Expanded reach with Spanish-language tour version (2026)
- Inspired other Colorado communities to launch TravelStorys tours
- Connected with visitors in ways brochures or signs cannot



## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Mobile audio drives engagement, learning retention (+24%), and spending

- **Longer stays = higher spend:** In tourism contexts, increased dwell time is directly linked to increased on-site spending—every 1% increase in stay duration correlates with **~1.3% higher visitor spend**.
- **Audio drives action:** Audio is a uniquely trusted medium; nearly **50% of listeners take action** after hearing audio content, and many go on to make purchases.
- **Stories stick:** Narrative storytelling is remembered up to **20x more than facts alone**, strengthening brand recall and repeat visitation.
- **Authenticity matters:** **75% of travelers** actively seek authentic, local experiences—exactly what community-voiced audio tours deliver.

### SOURCES

Skift Research (Traveler Experience & Authenticity Trends); Stanford Graduate School of Business (Narrative Persuasion & Memory Retention); Stanford Social Innovation Review (Storytelling in Mission-Driven Engagement); Nielsen Audio & Edison Research (Audio Trust, Action & Listener Behavior); Tourism Economics & retail behavior studies on dwell time and spending correlation.

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