

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the experience of several other heritage areas across the country, heritage tourism can unquestionably be a major industry for those regions who take the opportunity seriously. Heritage tourists bring in external dollars and inject them into the local economy, yet they require very little in public expenditures. For example, the hosting community does not have to educate the children of heritage tourists. Heritage tourism is a clean industry that does not pollute, it enhances an area's tax base, and it creates jobs. It is also an industry that will not relocate to places with lower labor costs or lower taxes. Additionally, it puts unused or underutilized resources and infrastructure to greater use, representing a fiscally efficient public policy strategy. However, in addition to the many economic benefits, heritage areas provide a much wider range of important benefits, including the preservation of historic resources, educational opportunities, environmental resource protections, recreational facilities, and an overall enhanced quality of life.

The Mississippi Hills Heritage Area is a unique place with a distinct history, culture and landscape. Its colorful personality and authenticity can fill a strong and growing nationwide demand for heritage tourism. Some of the numbers included in this study are but a snapshot of the true long-term economic potential that heritage tourism can bring to Northeast

Mississippi, and each day that the area's full potential is not realized is a lost opportunity in economic investment.

“So for those of you who think preservationists are only interested in stymieing progress, you may wish to think about how progress is defined. After all, there are not many vehicles that address the goals of economic health and livability better than historic preservation.”

– Why is Historic Preservation Considered to be in the Public's Best Interest?¹⁴⁶



By uniting forces and coordinating marketing efforts, Northeast Mississippi's many communities can substantially expand their share of the heritage tourism market.

9. CONCLUSIONS