



Expert Tips to grow your group sales

By Group Tour Media, publisher of *Group Tour* and *Student Group Tour* magazines

Invite your visitors to *make history*

Julie Jones-Whitcher, director of tourism at Rapid City CVB redefines heritage marketing



See it for yourself.

View “Do Big Things in Rapid City”
at www.visitrapidcity.com

Are you ready to do big things with your historical and heritage offerings?

Contact Group Tour Media about inclusion in the *Heritage & History 2015-16 Group Tour Planning Guide*.

TODAY'S GROUPS want more than to passively view historical sights. Rapid City, South Dakota, is enhancing its tourism appeal by inspiring visitors to *make history*.

The video on Rapid City CVB's home page gives a nod to the area's most famous offerings: Mount Rushmore, the Crazy Horse Memorial and its rich Lakota Sioux culture. In addition, the video shows hip, young adults using Rapid City as a source of inspiration for personal journeys of self discovery. Going beyond the legacy of the pioneers, the video challenges viewers to awaken their own pioneer spirit with a visit to Rapid City.

HERE'S JONES-WHITCHER'S TAKE 5 about revisiting the landmarks that made Rapid City famous:



Julie Jones-Whitcher

1. **Heritage and History is important to Rapid City because ...**

“Without knowing where we came from, one cannot understand who we are. We are fortunate to have American history that includes the Western frontier movement, as well as rich Native American culture in western South Dakota.”

2. **How beneficial are historic attractions from a business standpoint?**

“Historic attractions create cultural tourism, provide a competitive edge and add to the character and quality of life of a destination. Historic sites are a great asset and sell well to the multi-generation market, to traditional group markets including student tours, and to a mature audience.”

3. **How closely is your branding associated with heritage and history?**

“Our new brand – **Do Big Things** – is the epitome of heritage and history. It reflects the massive monuments we have carved in stone, as well as the big things that you can see and do when you visit.”

4. **Do you seek to achieve a balance with tourism attractions?**

“We are very fortunate to have a wide offering of attractions to reach all demographics. Rapid City offers a vibrant main street America experience. At the heart of downtown is Main Street Square with its open park-like setting and ongoing public art project. Lined with restaurants, bars and shops, music and dancing are likely to break out at any time. Just a block away is Art Alley, where colorful expression virtually explodes from the walls. Top it off with Bear Country USA and Reptile Gardens to make [our area] a well-rounded offering.

5. **Forecast: What's down-the-road for heritage and history destinations.**

“We must preserve what we have today, to reflect on it tomorrow. Yet to appease a wide audience, continue crafting and cultivating the experiences sought by the visitor or target market of tomorrow.”