

Project Name: Open for Heroes: Most Powerful Underground Railroad Storytelling Destination in the World

Project Manager: Heather Ersts

Purpose: Maximize the opportunity of the 170th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's self-liberation and the 181st anniversary of self-liberation by Frederick Douglass, and other important commemorations and products being launched into the marketplace. Partner with Maryland's Underground Railroad sites to increase transactionable outcomes. Provide exceptional customer service by marketing Maryland as the Most Powerful Underground Railroad Storytelling Destination in the World.

How does this project encourage someone from outside of Maryland to visit? The public is generally unaware of Maryland's highly active Underground Railroad and its heroes and leaders. The 170th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's self-liberation, 181st anniversary of self-liberation by Frederick Douglass, and the other products being launched into the marketplace, provides an opportunity for market expansion through promotion of Maryland's Underground Railroad stories.

How does this differentiate Maryland in the marketplace? Maryland is the state with the most documented successful escapes on the Underground Railroad and home to famous leaders, such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Henry Highland Garnet, Josiah Henson, the William Still Family, and J.W.C. Pennington.

Background: Describe how the project came about and how it will proceed.

The opening of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center and the promotion of the Year of Frederick Douglass has greatly increased public interest in Maryland's Underground Railroad stories. Now is the time to elevate Maryland's unique position in the Underground Railroad, bring public awareness to its NTF sites across the state and promote the broader role of Maryland in the Underground Railroad. See Delivery Dates below for the schedule of products being released into the marketplace.

Situational Analysis: Why is the project important? The project is important because it will further build upon OTD's investment to create visitor-ready sites and experiences telling the stories of Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Network to Freedom, and the Underground Railroad in Maryland.

Who benefits from the project? Customers benefit through increased awareness of high-quality experiences and a better understanding of Maryland as a "must-see-and-do" destination for authentic Underground Railroad sites and history. Tourism partners will benefit from the further development of partnerships and products. Businesses benefit from marketing.

Goals of the project:

- Partner with UGRR sites, DMOs, and Heritage Areas to maximize the opportunities of September 2019 to highlight Maryland as a premier Underground Railroad destination.
- Communicate the uniqueness of Maryland's Underground Railroad and highlight it's most powerful and significant leaders, both famous and lesser-known.
- Provide greater public understanding and appreciation for Maryland's Network to Freedom and encourage greater visitation at Network to Freedom sites.

Partners on the project:

- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center (MPS and NPS)
- NPS Network to Freedom
- Maryland State Archives
- Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Scenic Byway
- Maryland Network to Freedom sites
- DMOs
- Heritage Areas
- Maryland Film Office

Success measurement:

- Effectively launch Maryland as the Most Powerful Underground Railroad Storytelling Destination in the World.
- Increase awareness of Maryland's Underground Railroad stories and destinations.
- Have program and materials in place on OTD's Industry site for sites that are interested in applying to be a site or program in the Network to Freedom.

Delivery Date: September 2019 (Please see excel spreadsheet for most up-to-date event list)

Governor Hogan declaring September as International UGRR Month (not definite)

September 3, 181st anniversary of Frederick Douglass self-liberation

September 7, 8, 9, National Folk Festival, HTUGRRVC/NTF in Family Activities Tent

September 17, is the 170th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's self-liberation.

September 3, 181st anniversary of Frederick Douglass' self-liberation.

September 10, Harriet Tubman feature film release at Toronto Film Festival

September 14, Emancipation Celebration at HTURRVC, Premier of Visitor Center's orientation video

Unveiling of new Byway kiosk at the entrance gate of VC (tentative)

September 21 & 22, Millicent Sparks as Harriet Tubman, 21st a VC, 22nd 350th of Dorchester Co.

September 28 & 29, Concert at HTURRVC "Songs of Freedom"

Three new Maryland NTF members announced, more announced at the end of the month

New HTURR Certified Hosts 20-25 new members is the goal

OTD's Network to Freedom video complete

OTD's Network to Freedom Map Guide complete

OTD's Network to Freedom Web Pages complete

OTD, 20th year of work on Harriet Tubman initiative

Frederick Douglass Driving Tours Brochure

The Hill Community Project Self-Guided Walking Tour Brochure

Bay Country & other WC displays (tentative)

September 14, Linchester Mill Dinner (tentative)

NPS, Using the Night Sky Program (tentative)

William Still House ribbon-cutting (tentative)

160th of John Brown's Raid, October 16-18, 1859