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This is part of an occasional series by the Sanpete County Travel and Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance on the people and places along U.S. Highway 89.

Take a Trip to Sanpete County this Spring, Summer

Worried about taking a family "road trip" vacation this spring or summer due to ever-climbing gas prices? The Sanpete County Travel and Heritage Council has a great idea: come and take a holiday in the historical cities and towns along U.S. Highway 89, the Heritage Highway.

"Sanpete County is only a two hour drive from Salt Lake City and less than one hour from Utah County, making it a convenient and economical family get away, whether it's for a few days or a few weeks," says Kevin Christensen, the county's travel director.

"What also sets Sanpete County apart is that no matter which direction you are coming from, the drive into the county is spectacular, with beautiful scenery everywhere. Getting here is truly half the fun," he says.

Across Utah, many of the county tourism and travel associations are urging Utahans to take vacations "in their own backyards" this summer and explore what the state has to offer.

"In Sanpete County, there are numerous events taking place in the spring and summer months, from Pioneer Day celebrations to star watching parties to a Rhubarb festival. There is literally something for everyone," Christensen says.

In addition to the planned events and festival, the county also offers ongoing art exhibits, museums and other attractions every day of the year, he says.

May kicks off with the annual Rhubarb Festival, sponsored by Native Wines and Peel Furniture Works, being held May 13 at Native Wines, 72 South 500 West. The event literally honors the rhubarb, a common garden plant used in making food products ranging from pies, bread and wine to jams, jellies and ice cream sauce. The day long festival includes cheese and wine tasting plus a variety of foods and drinks made from rhubarb. There will be contests for rhubarb eating and rhubarb pie baking and awards for the best food products. There is also an ugly truck contest, a parade, soap box derby and more.

May 27 is Spring City's Heritage Days, a day-long celebration of the city's historical and artistic roots. Events include a 7:30 a.m. breakfast and a home tour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., arts shows and sales, and an antique show. Arts shows feature local artists Orsal Allred, Lee Bennion, Linda Budd, Susan Gallacher, M-lisa Paulsen, Cassandria Parsons, Cathy Peterson and others. A special attraction will be "Arts Squared," an exhibit that



features one-foot square paintings by the abovementioned local artists, as well as national artists Brad Aldrich, Doug Fryer, Brian Kershinik, Ron Richmond and Michael Workman. All proceeds to toward the city's restoration project of the Old Spring City School.

Also on May 27, Ephraim is celebrating Scandinavian Days. The festival is a celebration of the city's Scandinavian heritage and includes a parade, smorgasbord food, desserts, craft booths, exhibits, story telling and music, a quilt exposition, performing artists and much more.

In June, one of the highlights in the county's annual "Fly In" at the Mt. Pleasant municipal airport June 2 and 3. Pilots from all over Utah, the Intermountain West and beyond will be landing in Mt. Pleasant City for the weekend. There will also be a special "hanger talk" by Gail S. Halvorsen, who was known as the "Berlin candy bomber" for dropping packages of candy to children from his airplane. Attractions include free airplane rides for kids, \$25 helicopter rides and a "candy parachute" drop by Halvorsen on Saturday.

On June 10, there will be a "Hoedown" in Spring City featuring country and western dancing and singing, cowboy poetry and musical performances.

In Manti, the Mormon Miracle Pageant, runs June 15-17 and 20 to 24. The annual event attracts more than 100,000 visitors to Manti each summer. It has the largest attendance of any outdoor pageant in the United States, attracting an average nightly crowd of about 15,000 people. The performance is held on the grounds of the Manti Temple and is free of charge.

For those who are interested in watching the heavens, Snow College's Great Basin Environment Education Center will host "star watching" parties on June 23 and July 21 featuring instructors from the college's physics department. The GBEEC is located at 8,900 feet on the eastern edge of the Great Basin, near both Ephraim and Manti.

July is a very busy month in Sanpete County, with Mt. Pleasant's Hub City Days held July 1 to 4. It includes a mountain man rendezvous, rodeo, parade, fireworks and more. The celebration, in honor of Mt. Pleasant being the Hub City of Sanpete County, is just some of the many things to see and do along Utah s Heritage Highway, U.S. 89 over the July 4th holiday.

Gunnison City will hold "Home Town Patriots Days" July 2 to 4 featuring a patriotic fireside and parade and Manti will holds its annual celebration July 2 to 4 in the City Park featuring attractions, events, food, crafts, exhibits and more.

July 11 to 24, Fairview City will hold its Pioneer Days celebrations, including the annual "Lace Days" at the Fairview Museum, which celebrates the art, history and skill of lace



making, and attracts lace-making enthusiasts and visitors from the state, country and even outside the United States. Highlights include lace-making demonstrations, information on crochet, knit, netting, and needle lace, exhibitor tables, and a class on making lace ornaments.

Mayfield will also hold a Pioneer Day celebration July 24 with a parade and other events.

In addition to the scheduled events, the cities and towns of Sanpete County are known for being rich in art and art history. There is the Fairview City museum, with historical artifacts, exhibits and work by local artists, including works by the famous late sculptor Avard Fairbanks and his works on Abraham Lincoln.

There are also restored theatres and buildings, including the Moroni Opera House, the Star Theatre in Gunnison, the Manti City Hall Building, and most of Mt. Pleasant's Main Street. The county is also home to numerous artists, craft makers and unique boutiques and craft shops, including the Ephraim Co-op, which carries works of many local artists.

Sanpete County is also a popular spot for outdoor sports. Many of its back and country roads are open to vehicles, ATVs and bike riders. Rock climbing is also a big draw in the summer months with the county's rugged cliffs that draw rock climbers from all over the country. In particular, Maple Canyon, located west of Moroni, offers climbers more than 80 established routes. Fishing, horseback riding and camping are all other popular warm-weather sports. For more information on the spring and summer opportunities in Sanpete County, call (435) 462-2502.

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