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

County, a Hit With Tourism Experts, 'FAM' Tour Big Success

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How do some Utah tourism experts who visited Sanpete County recently describe the region? Let's count the ways:

"The perfect year-round playground."

"A very enjoyable mixture of incredible scenic beauty, exciting outdoor activities, interesting pioneer heritage experiences."

"So many things going for it as a tourism destination, it's hard to keep track."

"What a beautiful area! It's unbelievable to me that Sanpete County isn't more popular with local (Utah) tourists."

These are just a sampling of some of the comments made by participants of the June 16 "FAM" tour sponsored by the Utah Office of Tourism. The event was intended to "familiarize" media and tour operators with some of Sanpete County's "hot spots," including the restored Moroni Opera House, Maple Canyon, the La-Sal National Forest, Ephraim, Manti and the Manti LDS temple, Mt. Pleasant and Fairview. Along the way, participants also heard about the county's other cities, towns and attractions.

The purpose of "FAM" tours is to show travel agents, tour operators and media from various markets what the region has to offer in hopes of generating positive publicity about Utah's world-class destinations, according to Tracie Cayford from the tourism office. If the comments received following the tour are any indication, the Sanpete County event was a smashing success.

"The climbing in Maple canyon is superb, and is a good alternative to sites a little closer to Salt Lake City," said participant Austin Booth, who also remarked on the area's beauty and commented that he couldn't believe more tourists don't flock to the region.

"From a historical perspective, the area is also great. I learned a lot about early Mormon settlement of Utah that I'd certainly never thought about before," Booth said, adding he'd "highly recommended" it as a destination."

Fellow tour participant Clayton Scrivner said he was impressed by how accessible the region is. "We were in Moroni 1 hour and 25 minutes after leaving the Salt Lake Valley."



He added the county has numerous "gifts" for visitors, including heritage and recreational sites. "Maple Canyon, the Wasatch Plateau, and all the great towns and their individual destinations... And don't get me started on that temple, so majestic. I am sold on Sanpete."

Chad Davis, another tour participant, also remarked on the region's accessibility and uniqueness. "From Sanpete you can glance over the horizon and see the Wasatch Range in the distance, but it's a world away from the Wasatch Front. Quaint pioneer villages, small town charm and outdoor recreation make it the perfect year-round playground."

Next year, the state tourism office will be adding even more FAMS, promoting Utah's national and state parks, ski resorts, cultural and heritage tourism areas, including other heritage attractions along U.S. Highway 89.

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