**Network to Freedom Video and Web Pages**

**Project Manager:** Anne Kyle

**Purpose:** To reach the broadest audience, educate the public about Maryland’s Network to Freedom (NTF), and encourage travel to NTF sites, OTD will be creating online content for our website, including a 4 – 6 minute video about the significance of the Underground Railroad in Maryland. The video will be produced through Maryland Public Television.

**Background:** OTD currently promotes its official NTF sites through the printed guide *Maryland’s Underground Railroad & African-American Heritage Travel Guide*. Other than existing Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman related content, there is little online about Underground Railroad sites across the state. Maryland’s role in the Underground Railroad was prominent and includes several famous leaders, such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Henry Highland Garnet, Josiah Henson, the William Still Family, and J.W.C. Pennington. These leaders arose out of a unique set of circumstances where connections were created that encouraged bold actions, leading to a highly developed Underground Railroad network and activity. On the border with freedom, Maryland’s antebellum communities became an incubator of free thought and ideas, where a flow of information created an active Underground Railroad network and fostered the development of major Underground Railroad leaders. The public is generally unaware of the unique situation that led to Maryland’s highly active role in the Underground Railroad. There were more opportunities for successful flights to freedom. There is an opportunity to broaden this awareness and promote Maryland’s Underground Railroad story statewide, while increasing travel to these exciting locations. OTD received a grant from the NPS Network to Freedom Program to partially fund production of the video.

**Situational Analysis:** 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. Relaying the information about Maryland’s Network to Freedom in an online format will reach a larger audience with broader demographics, promoting knowledge of and visitation to the sites. A video will present this information in a compelling, engaging and easily digestible format. Online content with a travel itinerary and suggested places to visit will also encourage travel.

**Goals of the project:** 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. Web users will gain knowledge about Maryland’s NTF, visit the sites, attend the programs and experience the stories more fully.

**Success measurement:** Completion of theweb pages and engaging video. Web hits and video views. Click-throughs to NTF sites in our database.

**Delivery Date: December 2018**