



---

**Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)  
Committee Formation Presentation  
Government Operations Committee  
April 16, 2012**

**Introduction/Background:**

- Greene County Legislature Chairman Wayne Speenburgh announcement in the 2012 State of the County that a Tourism Advisory Committee would be formed. Karen Deyo and Warren Hart have put together a plan for the formation of a Tourism Advisory Committee.
- Greene County Legislature continues to recognize the importance of tourism and its economic impact to the businesses and residents of the County and each year makes a substantial financial commitment in support of Tourism Advertising and Marketing. On an operational basis the Tourism Office has made considerable improvements to its operations as outlined below:
- Restructuring of the Department combining the Tourism Office with the Department of Economic Development and Planning.
- Prepared an Economic Impact Analysis and Marketing Blueprint using two internationally recognized firms: Tourism Economics and Marshall Murdaugh Marketing, which analyzed the financial impact of tourism in visitor spending, private sector jobs, and local and state tax revenues, as well as detailed recommendations in the use of advertising and marketing tools to compete in the Internet driven travel market.
- We have been actively implementing the recommendations of the plan; such as
- Rebranding the County – (Brand) Great Northern Catskills, (Tag Line) Awaken to Adventure – Resonates extremely well with our tourism businesses and the public, works effectively with our target audiences in locating where we are in the Catskills and delivers a brand promise for visitors: Family oriented fun, Outdoor adventure (hiking, biking, skiing, golfing, camping, boating); World Class activities, events and festivals;

**GREENE COUNTY TOURISM  
700 Rte 23 B  
Leeds, NY 12451  
800-355-CATS**

Awakening of the art/culture/history and lure of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River experience.

- Hired Adworkshop/Inphorm as our first Agency of Record representing Greene County for all of its advertising and marketing as well as public relations needs.
- We created a new Destination Marketing Program:
  - Identify and focus on our key assets/sectors: All Inclusive Family Resorts - Family Fun; Inns and Bed and Breakfasts; Outdoor Adventure – Skiing, Hiking, Camping; Our major Attractions; Golf Courses, Zipline, Zoom Flume, Museums, Performing Arts Centers, National Historic Sites; Our major events with a growing market of mountain biking, road cycling, motorcycling, music festivals, ethnic festivals; Art/Culture/History – Hudson River School of Painting, Rip Van Winkle, National and State Historic Sites and Museums.
- 3 New Events this Year (Return of the Windham World Cup International Mountainbike Race; HITS Triathlon based out of North/South Lake, and another road cycling race put on by Anthem Sports and Tour of the Catskills)
- New Website with an Interactive Calendar of Events.
- New Interactive Media Campaign directly tied to our Public Relations and Social Media Objectives, New segmented data base of emails for direct email targeting, developed through our attendance at trade and travel shows and internet campaigns, such as the “Four Season Destination Greene Card”.
- We began engaging the Private Sector in a public/private partnership creating an informal group representative of our diverse tourism sectors and began meeting with our individual tourism sectors to seek input on the development of our media campaigns: such as, skiing, golfing, and family travel.
- We began using standard Tourism Industry Measurements and Analytics to track performance.

### **Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) Functions: 3 Functions**

Quote from the Tourism Economics/Murdaugh Marketing Tourism Action Plan:

“Form a Tourism Advisory Committee to build industry support to fulfill important tourism industry relationships: providing important industry

counsel on development efforts, serving in a supportive role for the Tourism Department, bringing special insights to the tourism management and market planning processes, and helping assure transparency for the organization.”

- Advertising and Marketing – The primary task of the TAC will be to provide industry specific input and support to the Tourism Office and its Advertising and Marketing Agency for the development of the seasonal media campaigns, target markets, and ad placements.
- Advocacy, Communication and Education – The TAC will also provide an important and growing interface in a public/private partnership between the needs of the tourism businesses, the Tourism Office and its Agency of Record, and the GC Legislature. Some of the tasks associated within this category may include: raising awareness of the importance of the tourism to the GC economy through internal public relations and communications. Providing training and educational forums on the importance of marketing and internet advertising. Increasing tourism business awareness and participation in the county’s destination marketing program, such as cooperative advertising, brand support, and special package deals.
- Economic Development Specific to Tourism – One of the more exciting opportunities that the TAC will be directly involved in is the identification of tourism economic development projects that can be newly developed or the enhancement of exiting tourism assets. We are trying to infuse new vigor and enthusiasm into growing the tourism market, with a focus on new tourism ideas that can be harnessed and developed as economic development projects. Of course, the largest project example is the Great Wolf Water Park. The economic development function of the TAC will be integrated directly with the economic development programs and functions of our two partner agencies: the Greene County Industry Development Agency and the Greene County Chamber of Commerce.

### **Advisory Committee Representation:**

- Lodging – 2 (1 -Family Resort, 1 - B&B or Inn)
- Attractions/Events -1
- Golf – 1
- Ski – 1

- Art/History/Culture – 1
- Legislative Rep. – 1

### **Advisory Committee Membership/Expectations:**

#### **Skillset:**

- Representative of their respective tourism sector.
- Have the time to meet on a regular basis and communicate back to their respective tourism sector.
- Have the ability to make a positive contribution and be proactive toward the enhancement of tourism in the county.
- Have the ability to assist in the conceptualization, development, and prioritization of economic development projects specific to tourism while balancing the use of grant funding and county appropriations.
- Have the understanding of the principles of modern advertising and marketing, such as:
- The use of Interactive media campaigns on the Internet using techniques such as Google Adwords, Paid Media and Pay Per Click.
- The use of Social Media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube
- The use of Public Relations to build a program of expanded media publicity targeting travel writers and media outlets to generate interest and desire to visit and write about the Great Northern Catskills.
- The use of analytics and tracking the performance of the website and search engine optimization

#### **Questions:**

Here are some questions that are representative of the types of issues and dialogue that will take place with the advisory committee.

- What would it look like to have a vibrant four season tourism destination in Greene County?
- How can we further develop established types of tourism in the County?

- How can we best use our community assets to grow emerging types of tourism?
- What are the most promising opportunities to expand mid-week visits and overnight stays?
- How can we capture more market share within the Catskills to entice people to stay longer, spend more, and come back more often?
- How can we capitalize on our large second home owner population to expand tourism in the County?
- How do we effectively communicate to the residents of Greene County the importance of tourism and the accomplishments of the county?

### **Timeframe/Tasks Moving Forward:**

- Drafting of basic organizational objectives for the Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC), presenting draft to the GC Legislature for adoption: objectives, membership, terms, meetings, etc.)(**May Meeting of Legislature**).
- Advertisement of positions, establishment of procedures for appointment (**June Meeting of the Legislature**)
- Appointment of tourism sector specific representatives to the TAC. (**July/August**)
- First meeting of the TAC (Organizational Meeting, Presentation of Tourism Office Operation and Destination Marketing Program, Presentation on tourism economic Development Projects, Start of 2013 Tourism Media Plans and Departmental Budget Allocation) (**September**)
- The TAC will likely meet on a monthly basis and then transition to quarterly meetings to align with seasonal media campaigns and, as needed, on a projects advisory basis.
- The TAC will be volunteers representing tourism businesses and/or associations and will be uncompensated.

### **Economic Impact:**

- In 2010, tourism in Greene County generated almost \$140 million in visitor spending in the local economy, an increase of 2.3% over 2009, with \$8 million generated in local taxes and \$8.5 million generated in state tax revenues.

- In 2010, tourism spending in Greene County generated \$8 million in local taxes (about 3.25 million to the County, which includes sales tax payable to the county at a rate of 4%, \$3.25 million to the local school districts, and \$1.5 million to towns, villages, fire and other special districts) and 8.5 million in state taxes.
- While tourism is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest private sector employer in New York State, it is Greene County's 1<sup>st</sup> largest private sector employer representing almost 3,100 jobs or a full 21% of the total employment within Greene County. In 2010, Greene County generated approximately \$25 million in sales tax revenue and \$20 million in property tax revenue. Therefore, the tourism industry generated about 10% of the total direct tax revenues that the County receives on an annual basis.
- Tourism in the Catskills Region (Greene, Delaware, Ulster, Sullivan) is nearly a \$1 billion dollar industry supporting almost 17,000 jobs. Greene County represents 14% of the region's tourism sales with almost \$140 million in traveler spending. In the Catskills as a Region, Greene County is also the most dependent upon tourism with over 22 percent of all employment sustained by visitors. Tourism sector employment also accounts for approximately \$61 million dollars in tourism related income representing 11% of all wages earned in the county.

### **Departmental Mission:**

The overarching goal of the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning is to plan for and promote economic development and tourism and enhance the quality of life for local residents. For more information on the local tourism economy, and the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning, contact Warren Hart, Director, [www.whart@discovergreene.com](mailto:www.whart@discovergreene.com) .