

# 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

## GREENE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND PLANNING

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- **Quantum Fund Loan Activity:** There were a total of 97 grants/loans in the portfolio as tracked through our Grant Management Tracking System (GMS) at the close of the 2013 fourth quarter.
  - New Loan activity in 2013 from the County's Quantum Fund leveraged private dollar investments totaling \$395,000, pledging 6 new full time equivalent jobs. The Quantum Fund loaned a total of \$125,000 to three businesses. Assistance ranged from a microenterprise loan for Gerhard Guitar Works which moved from downstate to the Town of Windham; assisting C & C Excavating with purchase of their previously leased property in the Town of Jewett; and assisting Just Pull Inn, LLC with a loan to buy the vacant Cedar Terrace Resort in the Town of Cairo.
  - New loans were also originated, which were approved by the Quantum Fund Committee and the Legislature, but were never closed, including a \$200,000 loan for Shady Harbor Marina in New Baltimore, and a \$60,000 loan for a purchase of a family automotive business in the Town of Catskill.
  - The Greene County Legislature approved resolutions authorizing legal action against three businesses that defaulted in 2013 on their loan obligations, including: Cameo's Restaurant, Mountaintop Greene, and Sirius Dog Food. All three businesses are closed and legal action has commenced.
  - The Greene County Legislature approved resolutions authorizing loan restructurings for two businesses in 2013, including: Wolfgang B. Gourmet Foods, and Anderson International Marketing, LLC.
  - Four Greene County loan recipients paid their loans in full.
- **Technical Assistance:** The Department provides continual assistance to clients (mostly County citizens) in business plan development and loan applications, many of which do not develop into completed applications.
- **NYS Direct Economic Development Projects (CDBG):** The Department continues to work with three businesses that received CDBG economic development funding from the New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR). In 2013, monitoring was conducted by the OCR for Crossroads Brewing, Blackthorne Resort and New York Spring Water economic development projects. No

significant issues were found by the State. The Department expects to submit and receive final close-out of these projects in 2014.

- **NYS Microenterprise Grant Projects (CDBG):** In 2011 the County was awarded \$200,000 for Microenterprise grants to businesses from New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR). In 2012, the Department worked to originate eight grants and grant/loan combinations to businesses in Catskill, Cairo, Coxsackie, Durham and Hunter. Eleven new jobs have been pledged as part of the projects. Final disbursements of the grant loan combination funds were made in 2013 and staff continues monitoring and reporting to the state.

- **Microenterprise Training:** The Department held one small business training seminar during the year, attracting eight current and potential entrepreneurs to our March session. The Department also continues to maintain a close relationship with the Columbia-Greene Counties Workforce Investment Office, as well as participation in the larger Capital District Workforce Investment Consortium, and has become the host for regular counseling visits from the New York State Small Business Development Center in Albany.

- **Casinos:** Greene County has been active in the discussion and solicitation of casino gambling facilities. In November, voters in New York State approved an amendment to the New York State Constitution which allows seven Las Vegas-style casinos with table games. Four casinos will be sited in three Upstate regions: Albany/Capital Region, Hudson Valley/Catskills and the Southern Tier. No more than two casinos may be sited in any one region. Three additional casinos will be sited in New York City, Long Island and the Lower Hudson region, though their siting will occur no earlier than seven years after the Upstate casinos are approved. No new casinos will be sited in areas that currently have Native American casinos. Greene County was involved in a forum on casino gambling conducted in November that drew over 200 people to Anthony's Banquet Hall. Organized by the Village of Catskill in conjunction with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, the forum gave people an opportunity to ask a variety of questions on casino gambling. After the referendum, the Department held a workshop with the Economic Development and Tourism Committee to review siting criteria and solicitations. The County sent letters to leading gaming companies expressing interest in hosting a casino. The County did receive some responses, and any positive lead generation was immediately followed up by Department staff. Engagement on this topic is still active.

- **Buy In Greene, Think Big:** The County's Buy Local program is in its sixth successful year. The campaign actively promotes buying local with a 5% discount card incentive that is accepted at participating businesses. By the end of 2013 the program had 135 participating businesses and 3,100 card holders. The website [www.buyingreene.com](http://www.buyingreene.com) had over 15,000 visits during the 2013 year. Site traffic decreased from 2012 as the amount of funds dedicated to the program has remained stagnant for several years. Additional funding for advertising and marketing is necessary to reinvigorate interest and participation. Campaign media buys are limited to the back to school and holiday seasons. The Department produced two flyers this year corresponding with those two

shopping seasons, which were inserted in local papers with a distribution of approximately 10,000. In addition, a coordinating Eblast is emailed to over 2,000 recipients.

- Buy In Greene was represented at the “2013 Buy Local Expo” sponsored by Greene and Columbia County Chambers of Commerce for the past 5 years. In 2013, attendance exceeded 600 people where over 100 Buy In Greene Discount Cards were distributed.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:**

- ***Main Street Revitalization Program:*** The Department continues to provide technical assistance for Main Street Revitalization projects even when direct County funding is not available. The Department is under contract with the Town of Prattsville and the Town of Hunter administering two NYSOCR Main Street Grants on their behalf providing direct grant assistance to over a dozen main street businesses for façade renovations and improvements. The contracts were awarded in 2012 with the program anticipated to be completed in 2014. The Department concluded assistance to the Heart of Catskill Association (HOCA) with the implementation of two New York Main Street Grants (NYMS), a streetscape project for the parking lots on Bridge Street and Main Street and funding for Creekside Restaurant. In 2013, the Catskill program was successfully monitored and officially completed.
- ***Disaster Grants:*** The County was awarded \$500,000 in funding from the New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR) for disaster relief. A total of \$286,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and \$214,000 in New York Main Street (NYMS) was received from OCR. Twenty CDBG projects were completed in Prattsville, Windham, Hunter and Catskill, while 16 NYMS projects received funding in the same communities. The Disaster Grant program concluded in early 2013. The County was awarded over \$50,000 in funding through a special allocation from the New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR) to assist farmers with losses caused by Hurricane Irene. The County made 10 awards of funding to nine farms throughout the County, in communities from Coxsackie to Prattsville. The County also administered \$450,000 in disaster funding from the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), for which 31 awards to businesses in Watershed Towns were made. While the grant funds have long since been disbursed, the reporting function is just beginning as the Department will continue to track and monitor these grants until such time as the State performs its closeout and monitoring procedure.
- ***Disaster Reimbursement Project:*** in 2013, the County contracted with NYSOCR to administer over \$8.8 million in CDBG fund payments directly to the impacted local municipalities which will allow the State to be reimbursed for the cost of providing the local share for the cost of FEMA projects resulting from Hurricane Irene. The Department has begun working on this project, which not only involves the County projects, but projects in every municipality except the Town of Athens. The contract for this program runs through 2017.

- **Other Disaster Projects:** The Department assisted with the start-up administration of the Prattsville special disaster grant of \$500,000 for housing and economic development, as well as working with projects in Prattsville and Lexington that were funded in the New York State Consolidated Funding Application round. The Department remains as a technical resource for these communities in their recovery. The Department continues to service disaster loans made from its Quantum Fund that provided zero-interest assistance for job-retention projects.
- **Technical Assistance:** The Department provides a number of supports for other agencies and organizations in their efforts to apply for funds, including Catskill Mountain Housing Development Corporation, Greene County Council on the Arts, Not-For-Profits, local businesses and organizations. The Department also closely partners with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce to deliver services to the community. The Department has also been involved in the New York Rising Communities program, providing technical assistance to the Town of Prattsville as they implement their New York Rising Communities program. Technical assistance has also been provided to individuals and businesses to complete applications for New York Rising assistance.

## **PLANNING:**

- **Greene County Planning Board (CPB):** The Department provided staff assistance to the CPB, including arranging for meetings and assisting in the review of Planning and Zoning Referrals from local municipalities. In 2013, the Department assisted with the review of 37 projects. In addition, the Department hosted 2 training sessions for County and local planning boards, assisting with municipal training credits, including: Case Law Update, Enforcement of Zoning and Other Laws, and Record Keeping on May 22, 2013 and Stormwater Regulation for Local Review Boards and the new State Environmental Quality Review Act forms and GIS mapping resources on October 7, 2013. The Department also coordinated the annual CPB Ellen Rettus Planning Achievement Awards with 2 recipients receiving recognition at the December meeting of the County Legislature.
- **Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board – Annual Agricultural District Review:** The Department worked with the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and county and state agencies to facilitate the annual landowner inclusions to the Agricultural District. The statewide agricultural district program includes a combination of landowner incentives and protections, including protection against overly restrictive local laws, protection against private nuisance suits involving agricultural practices, protection against eminent domain takings, and preferential real property tax treatment (assessments based on agricultural value of land rather than commercial value). During the 2013 review 296.49 acres were added to the district, which now totals 38,576.09 acres.
- **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides funding by the federal government for the acquisition of properties that are located in flood-prone areas and demolition of flood-damaged structures thereon by local governments. FEMA reimburses 75% of all eligible costs including pre-flood fair market value, appraisal, title report,

survey, recording fees, boundary survey, environmental site assessment, demolition, and site restoration, with the remaining 25% accounted as the non-federal cost share, the responsibility either born by the Town and/or the landowner, or with special CDBG funds also provided by the State. Greene County is the contracting entity with FEMA. Greene County SWCD is performing the day to day functions of the program. The Department is the signatory on the contracts and assists with requests for proposals and procurement compliance. The majority of the landowner negotiations, contracts with the towns, contracts with the NYCDEP, and contracting with consultants to perform the necessary services for fair market value, survey, and environmental analysis are substantially complete. The program is on-going in 2014 with the first landowner closings and demolitions expected to begin in the fall of 2014. Special thanks and recognition are warranted for the Greene County SWCD. This is a time consuming and arduous program to administer.

- ***County-wide Tourism Based Trails Plan:*** The County was awarded \$118,000 in Federal Stimulus funding through the NYS Department of Transportation to complete a Countywide Rails-to-Trails/Trail Based Tourism Plan. The Plan provides an inventory and analysis of key trail related historical, cultural, natural and recreational resources; addresses engineering and environmental issues; considers potential linkages and partnerships; and outlines implementation and funding strategies. In partnership with the County Highway Department, the Plan was completed in 2013 with full distribution in 2014. Recommendations within the Plan have already been utilized by the Department to support local projects and to secure funding in the 2013 CFA Round of the Regional Economic Development Council, including the Kaaterskill Clove Experience and a Master Plan for the Hamlet of Palenville, being prepared by Alta Design and the University of Albany Graduate Planning Program.
- ***Greene County Emergency Services Interoperable Radio Communications Capital Project:*** The County is evaluating a major upgrade of its emergency services radio dispatch system including equipment upgrades and tower siting to improve system coverage and reliability. The first step is to site a tower on Windham Mountain to be funded by an existing grant (NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications). In 2013 the Department provided support to the Radio Communications Team on the environmental review and permitting for the radio communications tower on Windham Mountain, including assisting in securing the services of Delaware Engineering from the Department's roster of consultant services.
- ***Broadband Support and Development:*** The County continues to support efforts of private telecommunications and broadband companies to expand broadband to unserved and underserved areas of the county, as mapped and defined by the State NYConnect Broadband Program. In 2013, two State Broadband Grants were awarded by the NYS Broadband Office through the CFA Regional Economic Development Council to Margaretville Telephone for additional service in Halcott, and Time-Warner Cable, for additional service in the Hunter/Jewett areas. Other activities included extensive broadband coverage and data mapping as well as developing a framework and the necessary support to utilize the radio communications towers as a catalyst for a county-wide broadband deployment plan. The Department engaged the services of Delaware Engineering to

more actively address the County's interests in partnering with local telecommunications and broadband providers.

- **Catskill Downtown and Waterfront Plan – Streetscape Project:** The Department used \$45,000 in matching funding from the NYS Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program to survey and design streetscape enhancements on Main Street from just west of Bridge Street to Bronson, and on Bridge Street from Main to West Main Street. Grant funding also supported design work for the Catskill Creek Boardwalk/Walking Trail and an engineering survey of the Black Bridge. Final work on the design report was completed in 2013.

- **Greene County Downtown and Waterfront Enhancements CFA:** The Department secured \$600,000 in funding from the NYS Department of State through the Capital Region Economic Development Council CFA process and is partnering with the Village of Catskill to construct a waterfront trail along Catskill Creek from the Uncle Sam Bridge to the Black Bridge. The project is estimated to cost \$1.2 million, of which \$600,000 will be provided through the NYSDOS grant. Greene County has \$600,000 in matching funds in place to contribute to the project, including \$200,000 from the Catskill–Olana Mitigation Fund, which has been dedicated for downtown and waterfront development in the Village of Catskill. The remaining \$400,000 will be from in-kind services (as part of the \$5 million cost of the Central Hudson Brownfield Cleanup). The Department is also working with the Village of Catskill to finalize the design, location, and materials for the trail and to coordinate with related projects (including County parking lot paving, the Catskill Creek Stormwater Retrofit & Shoreline Stabilization Project, Canal Street, and work planned for the Black Bridge). In 2014, the Department and its consultant will complete design work. In late 2014 and 2015 construction documents will be prepared, permits will be secured, bids will be released, and construction will begin.

- **Catskill Creek Stormwater Retrofit & Shoreline Stabilization Project:** Greene County is using \$60,000 in matching funding from the NYSDEC Water Quality Improvement Program (“Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Projects”) to retrofit the County's lower municipal parking area to include bioremediation of stormwater runoff and to stabilize the eroding shoreline using techniques that will produce a naturalized (softened) shoreline along 300 linear feet of the Catskill Creek. Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District is implementing the project with the Greene County Highway Department providing the force account labor and equipment necessary for construction. The majority of construction work was completed in 2013. The Department is administering the grant contract and coordinating the project with other related projects in and near the County parking area. The project is planned to be completed in the spring/summer of 2014, and will be coordinated with parking lot paving and the planned waterfront trail.

- **New York State Open Space Plan:** NYSDEC and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places work with regional advisory committees to prepare the NYS Open Space Plan. The plan is updated every three years. Department staff served on the Region 4 Advisory Committee and attended Regional Advisory Committee meetings held on February 12, 2013, March 5, 2013, April 15, 2013

and April 25, 2013 (Region 4 includes: Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Schoharie Counties). The draft plan is scheduled for release in 2014.

- **Catskill Brownfield Opportunities Grant with Greene IDA:** Department staff attended meetings and served on the Village of Catskill Brownfield Opportunity Area Committee. The NYS DOS grant project is designed to consider the development potential of several properties in the Village. The project is being administered by the Greene County IDA in partnership with the Village of Catskill and will continue in 2014.
- **Waterfront Resiliency Grant with Scenic Hudson:** The NYS DEC awarded the Village of Catskill a \$60,000 grant in 2013 to evaluate the impact of flooding and sea level rise within the Village. The Department provided information supporting the grant and attended project meetings.
- **GIS and Graphic Design Services:** Many of the departmental projects require GIS mapping, data, and graphic design support. With the resignation of the Department's GIS Specialist in 2013, the GIS function within the County was restructured with all GIS functions moving to and supported through the Real Property Tax Services Office. Major projects requiring GIS mapping and data services included the Annual Agricultural District Review, the Main Street Revitalization Program, and various Tourism advertising/marketing projects. Besides supporting the departmental applications, we also fulfill data and mapping support services to municipalities, not for profits and various state and local agencies.

## **TOURISM:**

- **Tourism Advisory Committee:** The Greene County Legislature created and appointed the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) in August of 2012, which is comprised of 10 Tourism Businesses and Organizations. The TAC was charged with building industry support and awareness, and providing industry specific input on advertising and marketing. In 2013, all 10 members of the Committee were reappointed. The TAC met on a monthly basis, assisted the Department in the development of the 2013 Destination Marketing Campaign and the TAC Priority Action Plan. Extensive performance based reporting is provided to the TAC and the Legislature in the form of bi-weekly public relations reports and Google analytics.
- **TAC Priority Action Plan:** The Tourism Advisory Committee was charged with creating a Priority Action Plan, which was developed and presented to the Legislature and approved as the TAC 90 Campaign. The TAC 90 Campaign identified the following prioritized campaigns executed in 2013:
  - Destination Weddings Campaign encouraged couples to have their wedding in the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County and to make an adventurous vacation for the wedding party and guests.

- Adventure Passport Phase II campaign brought more awareness to all the adventurous things there are to do in Greene County with Buy One Get One Free at our adventure attractions as well as a contest that encouraged visits to multiple attractions throughout Greene County. The BOGO generated over 1,700 sign-ups and the contest generated over 35% of the site visits to the contest landing page.
- Additional Funds for TV Summer campaigns drove more families to stay in the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County this summer and enjoy a real mountain adventure with lots of attractions, events and lodging choices. The summer commercial supported the BOGO offer as well as allowed viewers to use their remote to request a Travel Guide; which generated over 4,000 requests. The winter commercial, which ran from December 17 through February 4, urged visitors to sign up for the Adventure Passport and get BOGO free ski and ride deals.
- Tourism Sector meetings, sponsored by the TAC, were scheduled to bring stakeholders together to discuss successes and opportunities within each target group. Meetings were held with all-inclusive resorts, B&B/inns, golf courses, and sportsman.
- ***Greene County Tourism Destination Marketing:*** In addition to TAC funds for prioritized projects, Greene County Tourism, as the County's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), along with our Agency of Record, Adworkshop, developed and executed an integrated marketing campaign that uses the latest industry tools to help advertise and market the county as a tourism destination. The DMO serves as a coordinating entity effectively bringing together tourism businesses and diverse community stakeholders to attract visitors.
- As the trends in tourism advertising continue to go from traditional media to the use of public relations, digital media, and particularly social media tools, Greene County Tourism continues to lead the way with a more aggressive marketing plan, including:
  - Digital Marketing (Website content updates, organic search, Search Engine Optimization, SEO/SEM, Pay Per Click Campaigns, Social Media);
  - Paid Media (Print advertising, Radio, Summer & Winter TV, Broadcast Production including Summer and Fall Photo/Video Shoot);
  - Public Relations (Press Releases, Pitches, Placements, Travel Writers, Targeted Eblasts, Internal Communications Eblasts with Tourism Businesses);
  - Marketing Collateral (Travel Guide, Sell Sheets);
  - Consumer and Group Market Travel Shows;
  - Adventure Passport BOGO and Contest;
  - Participation in ILNY Tourism Regions (Hudson Valley Tourism – HVT; Catskills – CATS) ILNY State Website.

- With the combination of web page optimization, via authoritative content and SEO (search engine optimization) press releases, visits to [www.greatnortherncatskills.com](http://www.greatnortherncatskills.com) increased by almost 81%, and our domain ranking continues to be higher than the four counties that make up the Catskills and the Regional CATS website. Additionally, keyword rankings were number 1 for Catskills Events, Catskills Outdoor, Catskills Family Friendly Attractions, Catskills Attractions, Catskills Vacation Packages, Catskills Festivals, and Catskills Museums. Also of importance, mobile and tablet traffic represents almost 28% of website traffic, doubling what it was last year.
- Our primary tourism campaigns for 2013 included: Family Travel and Adventure; Winter Travel, Fall Travel; Arts, Culture and History; Golf; Events and Festivals; and Destination Weddings.
- Public relations and direct marketing in 2013 resulted in the distribution of almost 14 Pitches, 13 Press Releases and 5 SEO Press Releases accounting for thousands of media placements, in such prestige publications as AAA New York, Car and Travel, and National Geographic. Twelve direct electronic Eblasts via our Bronto email service were also distributed to over 9,000 of our e-database subscribers to advertise specials, packages, and destination marketing information.
- In response to the efforts of the TAC, GC Tourism created an additional TV media buy to enhance the winter media plan. Additional funds were approved by the Legislature, which allowed us to capture cablevision viewers as well as extend the buys for News 12 and Time Warner viewers.
- Greene County Tourism executed two photo and video shoots to help capture media for broadcast and advertising purposes. The first shoot was held for two-days in the summer with a focus on outdoor adventure on the river towns, waterside dining, lodging experiences at a B&B and Family Resort, fun at a local attraction, and the Zoom Flume Water Park. The second shoot took place in one day in the fall with a focus on golf, the Sunny Hill Viking Obstacle Course, and an evening out at a local brewery. Both shoots captured the GNC 3.0 Destination Marketing Organization Strategic Plan ensuring that all three target audiences; adventure seeker, family, and leisure traveler, were captured.
- Greene County Tourism, in partnership with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, held a fall 2013 Orville Slutzky Tourism Seminar in April at the Kaaterskill Mountain Club where about 100 local businesses learned about the County's Adventure Passport Contest and Destination Marketing Programs. They also heard a presentation on Being Effective with Web-Based Tourism Marketing. The entire event was followed with a business after hours sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.
- Attending shows is an important method to showcase Greene County as a four season destination, to distribute travel guides, and capture names for the database. In 2013, GC Tourism attended or partnered with Greene County businesses or the ILNY CATS Region to attend 19 travel shows (consumer, motor coach/group business) where qualified names were captured and added to our email database.

- Marketing support was provided to events and festivals throughout Greene County via paid media, website, social media, press releases, etc. There were two new large events, the Sunny Hill Viking Obstacle Race and Taste of Country Music Festival. The Tourism Office also provided logistical support for over 10 events/races, such as, coordination of support meetings with municipality/agency connections, volunteer recruitment, and liaison support with the event promoters.
  
- In 2013, the Department purchased a new tourism vehicle to replace the 13 year old Ford Expedition. In an effort to maximize advertising dollars the vehicle was wrapped in visuals of the adventurous things to do in Greene County (i.e. golf, ziplining, mountain biking, hiking, water sports) and used as a mobile billboard. Additionally, employees used this vehicle to attend work related meetings or deliver necessary tourism material to partners. Also, the vehicle was used as a mobile visitor center touring to over 50 events, lodging facilities, and attractions throughout Greene County. In 2014 the Jeep Wrap won a prestigious Addy Award from the Albany Ad Club.
  
- The Historic Catskill Point has seen an increase in traffic as well as revenue. There were twelve visits from vessels and cruise lines, twenty-four events, including weddings, and three bass tournaments that took place at the Point which generated over \$32,000 in revenue, up 40% from last year. The Tourism Office oversees all public events at the Historic Catskill Point.
  
- **Regional Tourism Partnerships:** Greene County Tourism is designated by the Greene County Legislature as the Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA) for participation in the ILNY Regional Matching Funds Program. Greene County is a participating member of the ILNY Hudson Valley Travel Region found at [www.travelhudsonvalley.com](http://www.travelhudsonvalley.com) and is officially designated by ILNY as part of the Catskill Travel Region, represented by Catskill Area Tourism Services (CATS) through [www.visitthecatskills.com](http://www.visitthecatskills.com). CATS is a Regional Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) representing the four counties that comprise the region. CATS uses Matching Funds from the Counties and ILNY to implement an annual marketing campaign inclusive of public relations, traditional and digital media, regional travel shows, and legislative action.
  
- **Capital Region Economic Development Council (CFA) – Greene County Tourism Grant:** Greene County Tourism was awarded a grant from the ILNY, Empire State Development, Market New York Program, in the amount of \$150,000 for the Kaaterskill Clove – America’s First Vacation Destination: Building a National Awareness Campaign. The creation and implementation of a comprehensive advertising and marketing campaign to promote the Kaaterskill Clove Project is the first step to shift to the target segments of culture and heritage day-trippers and overnight stays from Albany and the Capital Region as well as NYC metro areas. The advertising and marketing plan will include an adaptive website, digital advertising, social media advertising and Pay-Per-Click advertising. This project and grant application took months to develop with the support of several key partners and will represent dozens of attractions and supporting tourism businesses. This grant was awarded in 2013, with the campaign delivery in 2013-2014.

- **Capital Region Economic Development Council (CFA) – HVT, Inc. Tourism Grant:** Hudson Valley Tourism, Inc. was awarded a grant from the ILNY, Empire State Development, Market New York Program, in the amount of \$300,000 to highlight the historic, cultural, culinary amenities and great outdoors that the Hudson River Valley has to offer as a means of attracting additional visitors and visitor spending. Greene County is one of the counties in the region that will benefit from the grant. This grant was awarded in 2012, with the campaign delivery in 2013-2014.
  
- **Capital Region Economic Development Council (CFA) – CATS Tourism Grant:** Catskill Area Tourism Services (CATS) has been awarded a grant from the ILNY, Empire State Development, Market New York Program, in the amount of \$270,000 for the Catskill Travel region to execute an advertising campaign focusing on outdoor recreation, attractions and events. CATS, and its Agency of Record, Focus Media, prepared and submitted the application on behalf of CATS. Greene County is one of the counties in the region that will benefit from the grant. This grant was awarded in 2013, with the campaign delivery to be in 2013-2014.
  
- **NYS Path Through History Program:** Governor Cuomo unveiled New York's "Path Through History," Program, a statewide roadmap that ties historically and culturally significant sites, locations and events throughout the Empire State. The program is designed to promote tourism and economic development in communities in every region of the state. GC Tourism participated in the NYS Path Through History Program through the Capital Region Economic Development Council by submitting its listing data of major attractions and providing recommendations for NYS Thruway signage. In 2013, the PTH road signs were posted. The Department continues to participate in the PTH Committee and support of the PTH state website.

## **TRANSPORTATION:**

- **Greene County Transit System:** The Department operates the County's public transportation system, supported in part by the NYS Department of Transportation through the State Transportation Operating Assistance (STOA) Program. Operation of the Greene County Transit System is currently provided by First Student, Inc. through an annual third party contract. The bus follows a route each day of the week providing service to different areas of the County, running from 9-5 while circulating a mid-day shuttle in the Village of Catskill. The majority of riders are senior citizens, whose fares are paid by the GC Office of Human Services; however it also serves the general fare-paying public. In 2013, the bus operated 246 days providing 6,098 rides which is an increase of 826 rides or 15.7% from 2012. Additional changes to the transit system in 2013, included: major repairs were made to one of the two transit buses, which are used on a rotational basis; a card ID system was implemented for senior riders in partnership with the GC Office of Human Services; and there was an increase in fares for special route deviation services.

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS:**

- ***Greene County Government Website:*** Assisted the County Administrator with the development and implementation of a new website for the County, [www.greenegovernment.com](http://www.greenegovernment.com). KathodeRay Media was the consultant used to design the site and work with the project team, which included the Office of the County Administrator and the Departments of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning and Information Technology. The project began in late 2012 and the site launched in April of 2013. Improvements to the site were also made in 2013 with the addition of a web calendar providing new functionality for departments and searchability for residents. Since the beginning of launch the site was visited 108,556 times with 68,460 unique visits. (New visitors only counted once). The Information Technology Department oversees the website while the Economic Development and Tourism Department's involvement continues by providing Google Analytics to track performance on the website.
  
- ***Economic Development and Tourism Website:*** The Departmental launched a new webpage for Economic Development and Planning on the County website at [www.greenegovernment.com/departments/planning-economic-development/](http://www.greenegovernment.com/departments/planning-economic-development/). KathodeRay Media was the consultant used to design the site. The webpage was launched in December of 2013. The Department's webpage previously lived as a stand-alone website at [www.greenebusiness.com](http://www.greenebusiness.com).
  
- ***Candyman Property Purchase and Development Proposal:*** The Department assisted the County Administrator with the preparation and distribution of a Property Purchase and Development Proposal, soliciting proposals for the purchase and redevelopment of County owned property, formerly known as the Candyman. The goal of the project is to award the sale of the property to a developer to achieve the following: reduction of slum and blight; placing the property back on the tax rolls; providing opportunities for new businesses; and job creation.