

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

GREENE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND PLANNING

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- **Quantum Fund Loan Activity:** There were a total of 95 grants/loans in the portfolio as tracked through our Grant Management Tracking System (GMS) at the close of the 2014 fourth quarter.
 - New Loan activity in 2014 from the County's Quantum Fund leveraged private dollar investments totaling \$1,280,000, pledging 15 new full time equivalent jobs. The Quantum Fund loaned a total of \$465,000 to five businesses. Assistance ranged from a microenterprise loan for Nina's Last Chapter, a food wagon in Lexington; assisting Field Goods with purchase of a new building in the Town of Athens; assisting Ross Site Development Company to buy the old mushroom plant in Coxsackie; assisting New York Restaurant Catskill Corp with a loan to open a restaurant in Catskill; and assisting Wellness RX, LLC with a loan to open a pharmacy in Tannersville. In comparison to 2013 loan portfolio activity, two additional loans were made, and \$370,000 of additional funds were dispersed. Private investment increased by \$885,000.
 - The Greene County Legislature approved one resolution in 2014 authorizing legal action on 2351 Route 145 Inc. (aka Lawyers General Store)
 - Four Greene County loan recipients paid their loans in full: AJ Young & Son, Prattsville; GNH Lumber, Greenville; Log Cabin Café, Cairo; and Christman's Windham House, Windham. One first time home buyer grant was repaid as the home sold prior to the end of the 15 year mortgage term.
 - Several loan projects that have defaulted and are in various stages of legal action, include:
 - Cameo's Restaurant, Athens – Legal Action Pending
 - Athens on the Hudson – Legal Action Pending
 - Mountaintop Greene – Settlement payments, result of collections
 - River Street Bakers, Catskill – Settlement payment
 - Sirius Dog Food – Collections
 - CRL Holding, Greenville – Collections
 - Friar Tuck, Catskill – Collections

- **Direct Economic Development Projects (CDBG):** The Department obtained a \$266,000 grant from NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) on behalf of Ferguson Enterprises, the plumbing/HVAC warehouse that is nearing completion in Coxsackie. Twenty-five jobs were pledged for the CDBG project, and it is anticipated that Ferguson will open in August and eventually employ 95 people. The CDBG grant was part of a State-led investment package that attracted the Virginia-based company to Greene County.
- **Direct Economic Development Projects (CDBG):** The Department obtained a \$42,000 grant from NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) on behalf of Zoom Flume Waterpark LLC for the renovation and expansion of the existing waterpark entrance. Zoom Flume Waterpark LLC is evaluating the terms of the grant, as the amount of the award was reduced and the state no longer accepts seasonal employment as eligible.
- **Infrastructure Grant:** The Department obtained a new 2014 CFA Capital Region Economic Development Council grant administered through Empire State Development (ESD) for \$37,500 to conduct an infrastructure study. The study will quantify the available public infrastructure, and tie it to potential development sites that can be used to attract new businesses and business expansions.
- **Microenterprise Grant:** The Department obtained a new 2014 CFA Capital Region Economic Development Council Microenterprise Assistance Program grant for \$200,000, administered through the NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) for small business developments. Eight grants and grant/loan combinations will be made to businesses, with an emphasis on Main Street businesses and targeted business sectors. Eleven new jobs have been pledged.
- **NYS Direct Economic Development Projects (CDBG):** The Department continued 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 received close-out certifications for Crossroads Brewing and Blackthorne Resort. The Department expects to receive final close-out of New York Spring Water in 2015.
- **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. This grant remains open with the State. The County's 2010 Microenterprise Grant project received close-out certification in 2014. The County's 2008 First Time Homeowners Grant also received close-out certification in 2014.
- **Microenterprise Training:** 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 (SBDC) in Albany. The County also works with the Mid-Hudson SBDC, as they cover the Mountaintop.

- ***Business Retention and Expansion (BRE), Technical Assistance:*** Business retention and expansion is a primary task. Staff meets and/or talks with exiting business owners on a regular basis to determine needs and whether we might assist them. Staff also assists businesses with grant applications they are submitting to the state or federal government and that have to be submitted by private parties. Staff responds to inquiries from businesses and works closely with the County IDA in this regard. The Economic Development Specialist is the County appointee to the Columbia-Greene Workforce Investment Board, is corporate secretary to that board, Chair of the Business Services Committee, and representative to the regional workforce investment consortium (11 Counties). Staff manages the Revolving Loan Portfolio, tracks monthly payments, prepares quarterly financials, tracks delinquent payments and works with loan recipients that are delinquent, and coordinates necessary actions with the bank, the Quantum Fund Committee and the County Attorney.

- ***Interaction with Local Business Organizations:*** Department staff supported the activities of the Tourism Advisory Committee and the newly-formed Business Advisory Committee. Both committees provide industry feedback and support for the Department's economic development programs. The Department also works closely with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce and local Chambers and business organizations to meet the needs of businesses in the County.

- ***Business Attraction Program (Buy In Greene, Invest in Greene):*** In 2014, the County expanded the Buy In Greene initiative from a "Buy Local" only campaign to include a new and exciting component, Invest In Greene; "Cool Places, Abundant Spaces, New Faces". This new marketing campaign uses digital advertising, social media, Google Adwords and pay per click advertising to attract new and expand existing business to our downtowns, thereby creating more opportunities for consumers to shop locally.

- Facebook is the primary social advertising component, and within the first two months of launch our number of "likes" more than doubled from 2013. Upon the launch of our new website in October of 2014 there was an immediate increase in traffic due to our online advertising placements in BK Magazine, a magazine viewed by entrepreneurs, and "Brooklynites", The Upstater, a magazine that is the hub for New York real estate and culture, Chronogram, The Hudson Valley Magazine, and locally with Columbia Greene Media. Our current regional marketing efforts are focused in the NYC/Metro area, New Jersey, the Hudson Valley, and locally. In addition to the advertising placements identified above, the campaign uses programmatic buying, which allows our ads to be seen across dozens of on-line sites, directly to the audience that we have targeted. In addition, having a strong social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn has also contributed to the increased numbers in web traffic.

- Our online display advertising started in November and focused on buying local during the Holiday season. We did numerous banner ads on the Columbia-Greene Media website and also on Facebook, in addition to several holiday postings. We saw a surge in views to our online shopping guide during those advertising periods.
- In order to fully execute the marketing campaign we created the Business Advisory Committee (BAC). The Committee is comprised of representatives from the Greene County Chamber, local area Chambers of Commerce, representatives from the Greene County Council on the Arts and the Columbia Greene Board of realtors, and a legislative representative. Their efforts will help build local business support and awareness.
- Additionally, as part of our program we've created and printed several pieces of campaign collateral; a poster, rack card, business instruction sheet, a window sticker, along with a personalized letter from the County Chairman, that is being distributed throughout the County to all of our downtown businesses to increase awareness and participation in the program.
- **Buy Local Events:** Attended two Buy Local expos, one in Columbia County at the Basilica Hudson, the other at the Historic Catskill Point, in Catskill. Buy In Greene collateral and discount cards were distributed to over 600 people between both events. These expos are co-sponsored by the Greene & Columbia County Chambers of Commerce.

The first Columbia-Greene, Berkshire, Wine, Beer, Spirits & Cider Summit, was held in September. Our department assisted the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce with organizing the event. This was a collaboration of local wine and beverage producers along with State officials in hopes of working together to promote the industry, both regionally and locally. With renewed local interest stemming from this summit, Greene County craft beverage and wine producers have met several times with our department in hopes of creating a county wide beverage trail. We began assisting the Greene County Chamber of Commerce with filing of the NYS Craft Beverage Tourism Promotion grant that will leverage funds to help promote the industry within our County.

- **Market New York CFA Grant:** The Department applied for a \$100K Capital Region CFA Grant under the Market New York program to fund our "Cool Places, Abundant Spaces, New Faces" marketing campaign. This grant would have enhanced our Buy Local Campaign by expanding the impact and awareness of the County's Buy Local Campaign with the addition of an "Invest Local" Business Attraction Campaign providing advertising and marketing funds for our downtowns; identifying the availability of vacant and underutilized business; employing digital marketing, search engine optimization and social media. This grant was not selected for funding by the Capital Region Economic Development Council.

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 Department will conclude its contract with these two Villages in 2015.

- ***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 still active and 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 been working on this project as a conduit for OCR, 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 and remains open.

- ***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 loans 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 2014, the Department assisted with the review of 45 projects (up from 37 projects reviewed in 2013). In addition, the Department hosted 2 training sessions for County and local planning boards, assisting with municipal training credits, including: *Intermunicipal Planning, Locally Unwanted Land Use Regulation, and Downtown Revitalization* on May 28, 2014 and *Rural Planning and Aging in Place* on October 27, 2014. The Department also coordinated the annual CPB Ellen Rettus Planning Achievement Awards with 3 recipients receiving recognition at the November 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, Greene County Soil and Water Conservation, 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 2014 review 933.72 acres were added to the district, which now totals 39,509.81 acres. (During the 2013 review 296.49 acres were added to the district)

- ***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. NYS Office of Emergency Management is the contracting entity with FEMA and NYSOEM sub-contracts with Greene County. Greene County SWCD is performing the day to day functions of the program. Twenty-three properties in eight towns across the County are active in the buyout program (many more signed up initially but dropped out for various reasons). As of April 2015, nine properties closed and the remaining 14 will complete the program in 2015. Demolition takes place within three months of the closing and the property is restored to its natural floodplain state

permanently removing any flood hazard. Some towns will use the vacant parcels to develop small parks where feasible, and with FEMA approval, others will be left fallow never to be developed. The Department is the signatory on the contracts and assists with requests for proposals and procurement compliance. The program is on-going in 2015.

- ***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, prepared by Alta Design and the University of Albany Graduate Planning Program. A small amount of grant funds remains and will be used in 2015 for the design of identification markers for the proposed Catskill Creek Trail.

- ***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. In 2014, a tower was constructed on Windham Mountain with funding by an existing grant (NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Office of Interoperable and Emergency Communications). 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. The Department continues to work with the Radio Communications Team on tower locations and coordination with priority broadband needs of the County.

- ***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 2014, the Department contacted local broadband providers with a dual strategy of supporting local provider grant applications and soliciting proposals from broadband providers to work in partnership with Greene County. One solicitation was received and over the course of several months and meetings with the County, a strategy was developed for a public private partnership with Hudson Valley Wireless and State Telephone. The Legislature approved a resolution supporting and authorizing this partnership for the purposes of making a Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to the Capital Region Economic Development Council (CREDC) for broadband infrastructure funding. The CFA application was submitted by HVW requesting \$3.5 million dollars to develop County-wide Broadband Wireless Point to Point Subscriber Based Access. The County assisted HVW in the preparation of the application, including: field work around the County; inventory of towers

and critical facilities; extensive GIS Mapping and Data support with assistance from Delaware Engineering; application writing with support from Delaware engineering and ECC Technologies, our broadband consultant; coordination with the Emergency Services Department on tower plans and coordination with the Radio Communications Project. Considerable time and efforts were made advocating for this project to State agencies, the CREDC and its committees, and State elected officials. Support was also received from Ann Mueller, Congressman Gibson's broadband projects manager. The County's application was reviewed and scored by the CREDC and was forwarded to the NYS Broadband Office for consideration. Shortly before the CFA awards were announced, statewide, all broadband applications were put on hold, as Governor Cuomo announced a plan for a New NY Broadband Program.

- ***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 the 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 \$7 million cost of the Central Hudson Brownfield Cleanup). In 2014, the Department and its consultant completed initial concept design work. Tasks completed included facilitation and coordination of meetings with the walkway committee and village officials to review walkway trail alternatives, completion of multiple walkway and streetscape concept layouts and trail routing, multiple meetings with landowners and village officials, and completion of cost estimates. Landowners along the trail were contacted by the Village to secure the necessary easements along several private properties. In late 2015 and 2016 walkway construction documents will be prepared, permits will be secured, bids will be released, and construction will begin.

- ***Catskill Creek Stormwater Retrofit & Shoreline Stabilization Project:*** In 2014, Greene County used \$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 to create a naturalized (softened) shoreline along 300 linear feet of the Catskill Creek. Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District implemented the project with the Greene County Highway Department providing the force account labor and equipment necessary for construction. The Department assisted in administering the grant contract and coordinating the project with County Departments and other related projects in and near the County parking area. This included coordination of the parking lot layout design work of consultant Elan Planning with multiple layouts produced for review by project committee members. Construction was completed in the summer of 2014.

- ***New York State Open Space Plan:*** NYS released its draft open space plan in 2014. NYSDEC and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places worked 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 (Region 4 includes: Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Schoharie Counties).
- ***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 2015.

TOURISM:

- ***Tourism Advisory Committee:*** The Greene County Legislature continues to support the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC), which is comprised of 10 Tourism businesses and organizations. The TAC continues to build industry support and awareness, and provides industry specific input on advertising and marketing. In 2014, all 10 members of the Committee were reappointed. The TAC met on a monthly basis, assisted the Department in the development of the 2014 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 2014:
 - A virtual interactive map was created to help visitors plan their trip to the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County. Since launch in April of 2014 there have been over 37,000 unique interactions with the interactive map.
 - 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.
 - Pic with Rip promotion brought more awareness to all the adventurous things there are to do in Greene County as well as increase the marketing database and Twitter followers. Greene County ambassadors attended over 15 major events where visitors were encouraged to take a picture of them with Rip Van Winkle and upload the photo to the Greene County Twitter page. Additionally, visitors submitted their email address to win great prizes. The promotion generated 169 email signups and over 700 twitter followers.

- Additional Funds for TV Summer campaigns drove more families to stay in the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County this past summer and enjoy a real mountain adventure with lots of attractions, events and lodging choices.

- ***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.

- In 2014 we created the GNC 3.0 Marketing Strategy that identified the marketing objective, target markets, target audiences and campaigns. Our target audiences consist of Leisure Seekers, Adventure Seekers and Family. Our primary tourism campaigns for 2014 included: Travel; Outdoor; Golf; Winter Sports; Events; Arts, Culture and History; and Destination Weddings, across four seasons.

- In April of 2014 the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County website launched an adaptive website that provides a more optimal user experience and eliminates the need for a stand-alone mobile site and separate content strategy. As part of the update a “Book Now” button was added to lodging facilities that had online booking. As a result 2,036 visitors were directed to lodging booking sites.

- As the trends in tourism advertising are rapidly shifting 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, External E-blasts with growing database of people wanting more information on Greene County);
 - Paid Media (Print Advertising, Radio, Summer & Winter TV, Broadcast Production including Winter and Spring Photo/Video Shoot);
 - Public Relations (Press Releases, Pitches, Placements, Travel Writers, Targeted E-blasts, Internal Communications E-blasts with Tourism Businesses);
 - Marketing Collateral (Travel Guide, Adventure Map, Campaign Creative Templates);
 - Consumer and Group Market Travel Shows;
 - Pic with Rip Contest;
 - Participation in ILNY Tourism Regions (Hudson Valley Tourism – HVT; Catskills – CATS; ILNY State Website).

- With the combination of webpage optimization, via authoritative content and SEO (search engine optimization) press releases, unique visits to www.greatnortherncatskills.com increased by almost 18%, and our domain ranking continues to be higher than the four counties that make up the Catskills and the Regional CATS website. Additionally, the Pay-Per-Click (PPC) program continues to perform well and garner qualified traffic, resulting in 7.5% of all traffic site-wide.

- Public relations and direct marketing in 2014 resulted in the distribution of 13 Pitches, 16 Press Releases / SEO Press Releases, and 6 Local Releases accounting for thousands of media placements, in such prestige publications as *Travel and Tour World*, *timesunion.com*, *Hartford Courant*, and *Vogue*. Press releases and pitches resulted in 66 sessions overall on the GNC website with over 3.21 pages viewed per session; which is 17% above average. Additionally, Greene County hosted 9 writers and 1 FAM Tour with UK Travel which is an increase from prior year.

- 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 Spring/Summer with a focus on Thomas Cole, Greene County Council on the Arts, various eateries in Greene County and hiking the Fire Tower and Platt Clove. The second shoot took place in three days in the winter with a focus on winter sports at Hunter and Windham Mountain, and an evening out at the Windham Winery. Additionally, a local photographer and videographer specializing in drone shooting was hired to capture footage at local events, like Diamondback Motocross, Tour of the Catskills, Catskill Mountain Thunder, Windham World Cup, International Celtic Festival and Irish Arts Week.

- Greene County Tourism, in partnership with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, held a 2014 Orville Slutzky Tourism Seminar in April at the Club at Windham Mountain Resort where about 100 local businesses learned about the County's Destination Marketing Programs. They also had a choice to learn about Digital Marketing from our agency of record, AdWorkshop, or learn how they can leverage the Greene County Tourism office. 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 2014, GC Tourism attended or partnered with Greene County businesses or the ILNY CATS Region to attend 15 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, Rats Nest Run and the return of the Windham World Cup. 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.

- The Historic Catskill Point has seen an increase in traffic as well as revenue. There were nine visits from vessels and cruise lines, thirty events, including weddings, and three bass tournaments that took place at the Point which generated over \$41,000 in revenue, up 20% from last year. The Tourism Office oversees all public events at the Historic Catskill Point.

- **Special Tourism Projects:** Through the enticement of a \$35,000 sponsorship fee from Greene County the 2014 Windham World Cup returned to Windham, after being away for a year, for its 4th year anniversary. In addition to the sponsorship funding, tourism staff provided assistance, such as, monitoring the website, forwarding volunteer and vendor requests to coordinator, distributing materials, fielding lodging calls for teams and visitors, and coordinating a support meeting. These collaborated efforts help to create a platform to assist WHARF in solidifying an ILNY 2014 CFA Award in the amount of \$245,000, which will be used for the 2015 Windham World Cup.

- **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 and is officially designated by ILNY as part of the Catskill Travel Region, represented by Catskill Area Tourism Services (CATS) through www.visitthecatkills.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 included an adaptive website, digital advertising, social media advertising and Pay-Per-Click advertising. This project’s website soft launched in late 2014 with the creative development and media buy taking place in 2015.

- **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 increased traffic to the HVT website with an average of 2 minutes onsite and viewing over 2 pages per session.

- **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. In 2014 CATS developed an RFP to secure an agency of record, where Adworkshop was awarded the bid. Although the grant was awarded in 2013, due to the lengthy time to complete the RFP and contractual requirements, the grant will be executed in 2015.

- **Member Item Award – CATS:** Catskill Area Tourism Services (CATS) has been awarded a member item through Senator Bonacic’s office in the amount of \$100,000. With these monies we were able to leverage a program through ILNY and reach international travelers in Germany and Canada. The Germany buy took place in the fall of 2014 which generated over 500,000 impressions with a click through rate of 0.18% for the digital campaign and over 3% for the email campaign. The Canadian buy will take place in 2015.

- **Regional Roundtable Host (CATS):** In March of 2014 Greene County hosted the annual CATS Legislative Roundtable Discussion which was held at the Copper Tree at Hunter Mountain Resort. This meeting provided an opportunity to advocate on behalf of tourism before state lawmakers and regulatory agencies. Topics discussed included tourism funding with regards to the ILNY Matching Funds and the Regional Economic Development Council, the support for a round 2 tourism related summit, and support for additional regulatory relief for businesses. There were over 70 people in attendance, including Congressman Gibson, Assemblyman Lopez, many Greene County Legislators, and representatives from tourism businesses from Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster counties.

- **Economic Impact of Tourism in New York:** The 2013 Economic Impact study was prepared by Tourism Economics for ILNY. The report highlights key economic trends and data for the State and then does a region by region breakdown. For the Catskills Travel region a few PowerPoint slides were of significance:

 - Tourism is most important for the Catskills and the Adirondacks.
 - Tourism spending in the Catskills was over a billion dollars and grew by 2.8% (3rd highest percentage growth of the 11 travel regions).
 - Tourism spending in Greene County was \$148.6 million dollars growing by 2.7% (2nd highest in the four county Catskill travel region) (Ulster 6.6%, Greene 2.7%, Sullivan -4.9%, Delaware -0.3%)
 - Greene County continues to be the most dependent upon tourism with 22.6% of all tourism employment in the region sustained by visitors.
 - Tourism in the Catskills generated more than \$133 million in state and local taxes.
 - Sales, property, and hotel bed taxes contributed more than \$72 million in local taxes.

- Were it not for tourism-generated state and local taxes, the average household in the region would have to pay an additional \$961 to maintain the same level of government revenue.

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 2014 the bus operated 244 days providing 5,270 rides which is down 13.58% from 6,098 rides in 2013. Of the 5,270 rides provided 3,568 are senior rides or 68%. We continue to provide route deviation services with prior day notice at double the regular fare.

The Department prepared and submitted the Annual 2015-2016 State Transportation Operating Assistance Application and the 2014 Annual State Operating Assistance Final Report. The yearly application entails: budget of expenses and revenues; statistical comparison of operations; public notice; third party operating agreement; and application and submission resolutions with the Legislature.

- ***Greene County Transit System, Coordinated Transportation Plan:*** Every year the Department evaluates its transportation system in accordance with the State's requirements for coordinated transportation planning. In 2014, meetings were held with the County Administrator, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, DSS, Human Services, Greene County Community Action, and Ulster-Greene ARC. During the course of these meetings, Ulster-Greene ARC notified the County that it was interested in partnering with Greene County to provide a coordinated approach to public transportation. Ulster-Greene ARC has indicated that a merger of the existing Greene County public bus, and the resources of UGARC's transportation fleet would allow the closing of service gaps and unmet needs for both agencies. The Department then met with UGARC and the NYSDOT over a series of meetings to map out a planned merger or integration of the two systems, with UGARC being the Third Party Operator. In addition, the Department provided a letter of support for the UGARC to make a grant application to the NYS Balancing Incentive Program Transformation Fund for the purchase of 7 buses that would be used for the newly merged transit system. UGARC was successful with their grant applications, receiving \$612,000 for new bus purchases. The Department continues to work with UGARC and the NYSDOT on the operational and contractual requirements for an eventual merger.

SPECIAL PROJECTS:

- ***Candyman Property Purchase and Development Proposal:*** The Department closed out the surplus property sale of the Candyman in 2014. Tasks completed included the solicitation of property purchase and development proposals, selection of the preferred purchaser, assistance to the County Attorney in developing the contract for sale (including appropriate contract terms and milestones for interior and exterior renovation work, site improvements), work with consultant, Elan Planning, to complete site concepts for the property and adjacent County parking area, work with Kaaterskill Associates to update the property survey, and resolutions with the County Legislature. The purchase was approved by the Legislature at its April 2014 meeting and the purchaser began work in the fall of 2014. Work is expected to continue in 2015 along with site improvements to the property in coordination with planned improvements by the County to its adjacent County parking lot. The goal of the project was to identify and 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.