



Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2015 - 9:30 a.m.
Fairlawn Inn, Hunter**

Attendance:

Committee Members Attending –Carol Schreiber, Baumann's Brookside; Russ Coloton, Hunter Mountain; Brian Christman, Christman's Windham House; Denise Kerrigan, Zoom Flume Water Park; Lenore Whitcomb, Winter Clove Inn; Jesse Tolz, Communication Manager, Windham Mountain Resort; Chuck Tomajko, Fairlawn Inn

Legislators in Attendance – Patty Handel; Gene Hatton

Staff - Heather Bagshaw, Nancy Petramale, Karl Heck. Warren Hart was attending a funeral.

Heather Bagshaw thanked everyone for attending the meeting which was held at the Fairlawn Inn in the Village of Hunter.

Heather mentioned some of the initiatives that the tourism office has been involved with in recent months, including New York's Best Experience and 11 Top Destinations in New York. In addition to marketing, working through these programs has increased our distribution of travel guides.

Heather then conducted a presentation on the programs the CATS region has been working on. The CATS website, www.visitthecatskills.com, update and marketing plan was fortified by a grant from New York State. As part of the marketing plan, social media strategies were put into place which has increased the number of likes on the CATS Facebook from about 2,000 to over 29,000 since the campaign started. This resulted in an increase in referral traffic to the Great Northern Catskills site, where Visit the Catskills is the number one.

She then discussed the good news announced by the Governor during last weeks' tourism event, which included a motorcycle event, attended by County Chairman Lewis and Warren Hart. In coordination with the Governor's big announcement, ILNY and the NYSDEC partnered with CATS in the role out of the Ride the Catskills campaign. The Governor announced that there will be a new ILNY \$5 million dollar investment in advertising and marketing for the Catskills and that that will be a Catskills Challenge in the summer of 2016. This challenge is similar to the Adirondack Challenge that the Governor has spearheaded for the past two years.

Heather then reviewed the proposed Great Northern Catskills (GNC 4.0) advertising and marketing campaign for 2016. Moving forward, major emphasis will be made toward mobile websites, social media, video and remarketing advertising. Heather noted that the Great Northern Catskills is well ahead of many of our competitors in the use of digital media, and our efforts are designed to strengthen our lead.

The amount of print advertising is continued to be scaled-back, as a more mobile and wired society has less and less need for print. The decline of print advertising was echoed by some of the members of the TAC. Heather noted that the continued decline of the retention span of the average American, now measured at eight seconds, meant that more video and intense advertising was required in order to get the same return in a very crowded and competitive market.

Along the same lines, advertising that tells more of a story, and/or uses third-party testimonials to tell our story, is seen as more effective than advertising from the agency in today's climate. The use of experiential marketing will be a key component of the Great Northern Catskills (GNC 4.0) strategy.

The meeting ended at 11:15 a.m.

The next meeting will be November 24, 2015 at the EDT&P offices at the Greene County Office Building.