

Positively Greene



COUNTY-WIDE UPDATE



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Special Year-in-Review Edition

December 2019

2019 has been an incredible year across the Mountain Top, Valley, and Historic Hudson River communities that make up Greene County. There's so many exciting opportunities, successes, and all-around good news, we felt the need to pay extra attention to some of the most meaningful topics we covered this year, and look forward to the successes to come in 2020.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Did You Know:

- Greene County is the only county in the Hudson Valley region who has had inflation-adjusted median household income rise since 2010. Noted in the Pattern for Progress Report. <https://www.hvoutofalignment.com/>
- Greene County had the highest percentage of growth in population ages 20-39, well above state and national averages.
- Greene County has the second-lowest "all-in" property tax rate in the Hudson Valley, and the second lowest rate of increase between 2008 and 2017.
- Unemployment for the year to date has averaged 4.1%, down 0.4% percent from a year ago.
- Home sales (Jan. - Sept. 2019) in Greene County rose for the 3rd straight year with a median home price up 1.8% to \$183,700.
- In-county employment for October 2019 was 15,400, up 100 from October 2018.
- Greene County 2019 sales tax revenue is up 5.87% with the holiday shopping season still ahead.
- Three Greene County Projects secured NYS funding through the 2018 Economic Development Awards:
 - Workforce expansion for the Stephen Petronio Dance Company in Cairo
 - Waterfront Development Revitalization Plan for Coxsackie
 - Village of Tannersville Water Treatment, Waste Water Sewer Connection Study

Moody's Upgrade Shows Confidence in Greene County

Greene County, NY

Rated Aa2 by Moody's Investors Services



On Tuesday, August 6th, Moody's Investors Service upgraded Greene County's bond rating to Aa2, an improvement over the previous rating of Aa3, citing strong financial management as evidenced by consistently sound reserves, conservative budget management and a formal policy to maintain reserves. This rating puts Greene County among eight non-NYC counties in New York State with the rating of Aa2 or higher.

<https://www.greengovernment.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Moodys-Rating-Action.pdf>

Upstater.com Cites Greene County's Low Property Taxes

A recent listing for a property in the town of Catskill surprised the writers at Upstater.com as they found Greene County's median property taxes paid on homes is \$2,411 – just 1.29% of the median home value of \$187,600. An [interactive map](#) comparing taxes paid in all NY counties shows Greene County homeowners pay lower taxes as a percent of home value than those in any surrounding county, and significantly lower than downstate (Rockland's median property taxes paid on homes is over \$8,000).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Five New Projects Receive Funding through Invest In Greene Programs



Greene County closed on five new projects in March using its New York State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. These new investments include:



The Woodhouse Lodge

New owners have re-opened the long-vacant former Rainbow Lodge in Greenville and making the property a 21st Century model for a small resort. Funding will help restore the café/restaurant to active use for resort and community events. <https://updates.investingreene.com/woodhouse-lodge-new-getaway-destination>



The Tasting Lab

The Main Street of Greenville has a new anchor property with the opening of this restaurant featuring New York State food and brews. Funding launched this destination. The building has gotten a substantial rehabilitation as part of the project. The Tasting Lab is under the same ownership as the Greenville Craft Beverage producer - Hop Barn Brewing. <https://updates.investingreene.com/the-tasting-lab-creating-local-vore-destination-greenville-ny>



A Clear Run LLC

This start-up business hauling cement and other product throughout the Hudson Valley and beyond from a base in Athens. Funding has helped this women-owned business to purchase the equipment needed to get rolling.



HiLo/The Avalon Lounge

Successful Catskill business owners Liam and Laura Singer have branched out with the purchase of the former Doubles II, turning the former weekend night club into The Avalon Lounge, a full-week, all-purpose restaurant and music venue. Funding assisted the re-outfitting and expansion of the Church Street building in Catskill. <https://www.facebook.com/theavalonlounge/>



Cairo Development Foundation

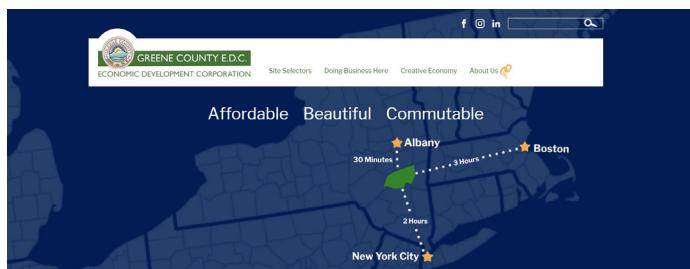
The recently-formed Cairo Development Foundation used CDBG funding under the slums and blight category to remove a condemned building on the hamlet's Main Street in order to create a pocket park, as well as stabilizing a neighboring building for commercial and residential activity. The neighboring Cairo Garage building will return to active use with the renovation of commercial space and two apartments catalyzing development on the Cairo Main Street. <https://www.facebook.com/CairoNYdevelopment/>

Leveraging the Economic Assets of Greene County



Greene County's Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Planning has retained Camoin 310 to update the county's economic development strategy. Camoin 310 and county staff are reviewing existing programs and conducting research and analysis to identify emerging opportunities. Findings from this analysis will be used to craft strategic goals and objectives for economic development in Greene County, and guide marketing and communications strategies.

GCEDC Launches New Website



The Greene County Economic Development Corporation is now online at <https://greenecountyedc.com/>. The site is specifically designed to engage site selectors and developers and promote the advantages and benefits of bringing job-creating businesses to our communities. Supporting digital advertising and social media campaigns direct information seekers to content ranging from available shovel-ready sites, to key economic indicators, to programs and incentives available to businesses starting or expanding in Greene County.

First Annual 'Best In Greene' Awards



The Greene County Chamber of Commerce partnered with Columbia-Greene Media to provide customers the chance to vote on their favorite local business across 50 categories in Arts & Entertainment, Community, Food & Drink, Shopping, and Services. Awards were made at a cocktails and hors d'oeuvres gathering at LUMBERYARD on Friday, February 1st. The management of the Stewart House on the Athens riverfront (pictured above) received "Bests" for Live Music and Outdoor Dining, The Historic Catskill Point was named Best Event Space/Wedding Venue.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Merger Expected to Draw More Revenue to Hunter Mountain



With Peak Resorts being newly acquired by Vail Resorts, more skiers across the country will come to know Hunter Mountain as a top destination. Cross promotion between the 36 combined properties under Vail's leadership will feature the newly expanded Hunter North trails and runs. See both stories at <https://www.hudsonvalley360.com/article/hunter-mountain-sold-again> and <https://www.huntermtn.com/mountain-info/page-6517/>

C-GCC Named Best Community College in NYS by WalletHub



In a comparison of 710 community colleges in the U.S., Columbia-Greene was ranked best in NYS, and 10th nationwide. The online financial services company WalletHub used 19 different metrics ranging from the cost of in-state tuition and fees to retention rates and overall return on investment. Read the full report at <https://wallethub.com/edu/e/best-worst-community-colleges/15076/>

Automotive & Construction Technology Programs Expand at C-GCC



Colonial Subaru of Kingston has donated a vehicle and a late-model Subaru engine to the Subaru University program at C-GCC. The college also used monies from the JK Winters Automotive Fund to purchase two more vehicles for the program. Additionally, the New Construction Technology Preservation Certificate Program enrolled students for the Fall 2019 semester.

Route 711 Teal Ready for C-GCC Student Riders



As the fall semester began at Columbia-Greene Community College, students were reminded that Greene County Transit Route 711 provides affordable service across the Rip Van Winkle Bridge from stops in Catskill to the C-GCC campus, Columbia Memorial Hospital, and the Hudson Amtrak station. <http://greenecountytransit.com/Routes-Schedules/Route-711-Teal> - A new mobile app for cashless tickets will be implemented for the January semester at Ride711.com.



New Uses for Main Street Renovations in Catskill

Multiple Main Street properties are currently under renovation for some exciting new uses. The former Law Offices and Bank on either side of Bridge Street (west of Main) will open as the Mr. CAT Hotel & Suites in 2020. The Catskill Mountain Housing Development Corporation is administering a NY Main Street program in the village, assisting HiLo in renovating its existing space. This program is also assisting the renovation of the legacy Central Hudson building with a restored facade for new storefront, living space upstairs, and Left Bank Cidery in the lower level with a view of the Catskill Creek. Additional restorations include the former Vogel's jewelry store at 380 Main Street, and the Twin Counties Building at 386-388 Main Street.

Historic Reed Street Area Improvements



Aaron Flach's family-owned development company intends to build an event center, a hotel and more on the Coxsackie riverfront featured in the Capital District Business Review. The goal: Turn the village into a draw for investment. Read more at <https://www.bizjournals.com/albany/news/2019/10/31/coxsackie-hudson-valley-town-development-project.html>

TOURISM

2019 Travel Guide Launches Greatest-Of-All-Time Getaways Campaign

In the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County, 2019 is the "Year of the G-O-A-T." Millions of Social Media followers recognize **#GOAT** as a tag for a "Greatest-Of-All-Time" experience, and capitalizing on **The Catskills** being named one of the Best Travel Regions for 2019 by the online travel site *Lonely Planet*. Our latest tourism campaign entices visitors to our experience-based, drive-to destinations, making the Great Northern Catskills their **#EscapeGOAT!** Find the 2019 Travel Guide at <https://www.greatnortherncatskills.com/travel-guide>.



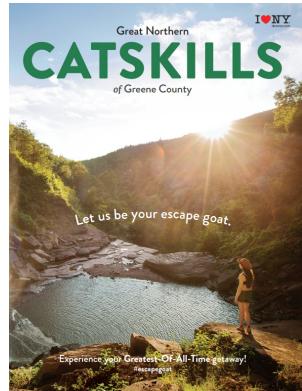
Newly Expanded Trails Open on Hunter Mountain

After 252 days of construction and infrastructure development, Peak Resorts officially opened Hunter North on Christmas Eve 2018. Hunter North expands the mountain's skiable terrain by 80 acres with 5 new trails and 4 gladed skiing areas serviced by a new 6-passenger lift and fully automated snowmaking.

Follow the Hunter Mountain Blog at <https://www.huntermtn.com/blog/page-5590/>

Westside Six High-Speed Lift Opens at Windham Mountain Resort

Westside Six transports skiers and snowboarders from the base to the summit of the resort's west peak in under five and a half minutes with a slope length of 5,105 feet and an uphill capacity of 3,000 people per hour. The completion of this project is part of an \$8M capital investment made by Windham Mountain Resort for the 2018/2019 season including: RFID Lift Access Technology, nearly 100 automated, high-efficiency snow guns, over 2 miles of new snowmaking pipe, and a new PistenBully 400 Snowcat for manicuring terrain surfaces.



Catskill Mountain Foundation Celebrates 21st Year

With the mission of "Transforming Lives Through the Arts", Catskill Mountain Foundation's multi-faceted program of live performances, film, arts education and artist residencies is a leader in Greene County's creative economy. World-class talent and venues like the Orpheum Theatre and Doctorow Center anchor our mountain communities as a major arts destination, contributing significant economic impact. Catskill Mountain Foundation is a great partner with our tourism office, and we wish them growing successes in the years to come. <https://www.catskillmtn.org/>



Hudson River Skywalk Celebrates Grand Opening



Stakeholders and wellwishers gathered on Saturday, June 1st to celebrate the official opening of the walking trail that links the Thomas Cole National Historic Site to the home of his protégé Frederic Church at the Olana State Historic Site. This public-private partnership project is the result of cooperation of state and county governments, non-profit organizations, NYS Bridge Authority and private entities. A destination for all interested in America's first school of artists is expected to draw thousands of enthusiasts to our area each year. Find out more at <https://www.hudsonriverskywalk.org/>.

Vietnam Memorial Traveling Wall a Huge Success



The 3/5 scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC arrived in Greene County on August 21st, receiving an honor escort by hundreds of motorcycles and emergency service vehicles traveling from Coxsackie, through Greenville and Cairo to its

Continued on next page

TOURISM

installation at the Historic Catskill Point. On display and staffed around the clock by some 250 volunteers, this hallowed ground welcomed over 6,500 visitors between August 22nd & 25th. View the photos at <https://www.greatnortherncatskills.com/vietnam-traveling-memorial-wall>

Tourism Analytics Increase!



The first half of the year was successful for Greene County Tourism's marketing efforts. Reporting a continued increase in website traffic, strong growth on social media channels and above average CTR's for paid media campaigns. Website traffic is up 12.5% in total sessions and 32.9% in organic sessions. Instagram following has more than doubled and month-to-month key performance indicators for Facebook are looking very good. https://greenecountyedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/GREENE_6_MONTH_REPORT_2019_FINAL.pdf

NYS Report Confirms Tourism & Visitor Spending Up in Greene County



Greene County had a banner 2018 with across-the-board growth according to the recently released NYS Tourism Impact Study. Travelers to Greene County spent over \$185 million in 2018 an 8.4% increase over 2017. Labor income in Greene County was up 13.8% year-over-year, and tourism-generated employment was 22.9% of the total employment for the county. <https://greenecountyedc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/NYS-Tourism-Impact-2018-Catskills-.pdf>

PLANNING



Exit 21 Catskill Sites Now Ready

The former Quality Inn located just north of the NYS Thruway Exit 21 was demolished after a long process ceded ownership to Greene County Industrial Development Agency. This highly desirable site has been prepared to attract a new hotel, supporting the growing demand for accommodations, restaurants and additional commercial businesses. See the demolition from the air at <https://greenecountyedc.com/development-site/exit-21-catskill-qi/>



DEC Adds 50-Acre Parcel to Catskill Forest Preserve

New York State has acquired 50 acres of property in the town of Catskill, Greene County. The lands will become part of New York's Forest Preserve. DEC acquired the property for \$1 from Edward Maby. The property had been in the Maby/Mabie family since 1896. The acquisition of this Catskill property will improve public recreational access in the area and includes remnants of the historic Rip Van Winkle House. Read the official press release at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/116572.html>

Pocket Park Construction Begins in Tannersville



RFP for New Hotel at Exit 21 Catskill

The Greene County Industrial Development Agency released a Request for Proposal to hotel developers to build on the site of the former Quality Inn adjacent to NYS Thruway Exit 21. The goal is to bring easily accessible hotel rooms and meeting space to the site, including a restaurant and possible retail space. The agency is now actively engaged with a hotel developer. More information can be found at <https://www.greeneida.com/10-projects/30-exit21qi-rfp>



With NYS funding in place, the first stage of the Gooseberry Revitalization Project (a joint effort of the Village of Tannersville, Place Alliance and River Street Planning and Development) began construction of the "Creekside Pocket Park" along the Sawkill. A terraced entrance, glass pavilion (reflecting the greens of the Catskill Mountains), and landscaped sitting areas will encourage visitors and residents alike to come, sit, and contemplate the beauty of Tannersville. Read more at <https://www.swca.com/news/2017/01/gooseberry-creek-revitalization-strategy>

PLANNING

Planning for Renewables



Newly enacted legislation requires New York to get 70 percent of its electricity from renewable sources like wind, solar and hydropower by 2030, and create a statewide electrical demand system

with zero emissions by 2040. Some municipalities in the county have grappled with the need to determine how best to plan for and regulate solar facilities at the local level that both protect community character and at the same time support and encourage renewable forms of producing power. Principal Planner Rich Schiafo has created a helpful list of resources with links to find additional information at <https://www.greengovernment.com/departments/planning-and-economic-development/renewable-energy>

Agriculture & Farmland 8-Year Review Begins

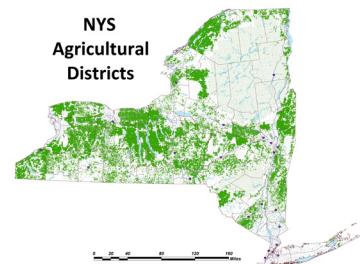


This summer the Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning, along with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board began the '8-year' review of its Agricultural District in accordance with the New York Agricultural Districts law. This process included a 30-day period when municipalities and land owners within the district may propose a modification of the district by petitioning the county for inclusion of viable agricultural lands. Greene County currently has one inclusive Agricultural District

with 286 farms covering 38,333 acres. During the 8-year review land can also be removed from the district. For further information, please contact Rich Schiafo, Principal Planner, rschiafo@discovergreene.com, (518) 719-3290.

Recertification of Agricultural District 124

The Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Planning, along with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB), has begun the mandated recertification process for Agricultural District 124 in accordance with the New York Agricultural Districts law. Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning, and the AFPB, will be partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia-Greene Counties to survey Agricultural District 124 farmers to collect information about their farm operations. The county conducted a thirty-day comment and open enrollment period from October 1, 2019 through October 30, 2019.



Census 2020

The Census Bureau is hiring a large number of temporary workers for the 2020 Census at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs>. Greene County residents are reminded that the 2020 Census will be mailed on April 1, and completing the Census with your Greene County address helps the Census compete for Federal funding in a variety of program areas. Please be aware of the Census and complete it in Greene County as soon as you get it. Find out more at <https://www.greengovernment.com/departments/planning-and-economic-development/us-census-2020>

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Greene County Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning

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