

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JUNE 30, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS	REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
MERLINO	KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
KENNY	PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
BELDEN	TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
STRAINER	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE
GOODSPEED	& FISCAL SERVICES
MCCOY	NICOLE LIVINGSTON, DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
CONOVER	SUPERVISORS CHAMPAGNE
	GIRARD
	LOEB
	TAYLOR
	THOMAS
	FRANK O'KEEFE, COUNTY TREASURER
	LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS
	MIKE CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR
	REPRESENTING THE ADIRONDACK HOT AIR BALLOON FESTIVAL:
	JOAN GRISHKOT
	WALTER GRISHKOT
	MARK DONAHUE
	MIKE MCCARTHY
	DON LEHMAN, <i>THE POST STAR</i>
	CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 9:30 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Catamount Color to print 85,000 copies of the 2010 Fall Brochure, for a term commencing July 6, 2010 and terminating August 31, 2010, for a total amount not to exceed \$5,414. She advised seven vendors had been solicited and Offset House Printing, who recently changed their name to Catamount Color, was the lowest bidder.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Strainer and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Catamount Color as outlined. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the July 16, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson reviewed the magazines in which Warren County Tourism spring and summer advertisements had run and displayed samples to the Committee members. She stated Warren County Tourism had placed ads in each of the five publications produced by Meredith Magazines and 11,664 responses had been garnered from those ads. She displayed an insert that had appeared in *Budget Travel* entitled "Girlfriend Getaways" which had generated over 3,000 responses. She noted the Department tracked all of the responses received and negotiated advertising rates with the publications. She pointed out that New York State had produced its 2010 Summer Travel Guide and had offered Warren County Tourism the inside front cover free of charge.

Ms. Johnson reported the quarterly newsletter had been sent in May to 664 email addresses and 586 had opened the email blast. She commented that the Department was in the process of updating information for the 2011 Travel Guide and over 1,000 tourism related businesses in the County would receive a free listing. She added the Travel Guide also offered opportunities for paid advertisements and she felt it was a good opportunity for Towns to use occupancy tax funding to highlight their history, events and attractions. She advised that in the past the Department had expended undue effort in updating the information of the businesses featured in the Travel Guide; however, she added, this year if there was no response to the inquiry sent by the Department, there would be no update to the information.

Ms. Johnson advised there was a new marketing campaign entitled, "Decks of the Lake George Area in New York's Adirondacks". She said they had solicited all of the dining properties to send pictures of the dining deck areas at their locations. She added there would be an email blast, posters and a link on the website to promote the campaign.

Ms. Johnson apprised that in an effort to reduce costs, Department employees were taking images of places not currently in the archives. She said the website contained a link to a kids page and she received a suggestion to add a link for couples, highlighting activities that couples could enjoy together in the area. She stated they were in the process of creating the couples page which she would display at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Johnson said she had met with Mark Evans who was in the process of purchasing 85 acres of property off Truesdale Hill Road in the Town of Lake George where he intended to construct a Canopy Walk. She added Mr. Evans had been interested in learning about visitor statistics, which were provided to him.

Ms. Johnson apprised the Department was ahead of the numbers from 2009 pertaining to people who requested the Summer Savings Coupons. She added the number of email subscribers had increased from 103,000 to 109,000 as a direct result of the Summer Savings Coupons sign-up. She advised a lakegeorgeny.com landing page had been developed in connection with Ad Workshop as an additional means of obtaining email subscribers through requests for coupons. She reported the Adirondack Attractions campaign had only attracted the participation of four businesses but they would continue to solicit in order to re-introduce the campaign in the fall.

Ms. Johnson commented that an employee of the Department had joined the Warren County Bicentennial Steering Committee and had made suggestions on how the Tourism Department

could assist with publicizing the event. Ms. Johnson continued by saying she had met with ConsultEcon Inc., who had been contracted by the Economic Development Corporation to prepare a tourism study, which should be completed by the end of July. She reported the Memorial Day weekend figures had increased by 17% compared to 2009 for New York State parks and campgrounds. Warren County's figures had increased by 14.7%, she continued, according to *The Smith Travel Report* and the occupancy level was at 75%. According to *The Smith Travel Report*, she said, occupancy during Americade week was 73.4%, an increase of 11% compared to 2009. According to AAA (American Automobile Association), she added, the number of Americans traveling this Fourth of July weekend was anticipated to increase by 17% compared to 2009.

Ms. Johnson thanked the residents of Countryside Adult Home and Westmount Health Facility for their volunteer work in assisting the Tourism Department by stuffing envelopes.

Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, reported that over 300 properties had been solicited for the 2011 Group Tour Planner and had been given a deadline of July 2, 2010. She said the Planner would contain full color advertisements, a glossy cover and new features, such as a "What's New" page. She stated the third annual Adirondack Regional Virtual Familiarization Tour would be held on September 22, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. and she explained it was a 30 minute online presentation of the Adirondack region with sample itineraries showcasing Plattsburgh, Lake Placid and Lake George.

Ms. Brand apprised 1,300 riders had pre-registered for Velo Quebec's Grand Tour, to be held August 7-13, 2010 and the estimated number of attendees was over 2,000. She said she was assisting with the recruitment of volunteers for the event and noted they would be paid \$8 per hour (Canadian dollars). She reported a press release would be issued one week prior to the event to publicize the routes and times that riders would be using the local roads in the Towns of Queensbury, Hague, Horicon and Chester.

Ms. Brand mentioned she had met with a representative from BMW (British Motor Works) Motorcycle Owners of America during Americade week to discuss the possibility of holding their annual rally in the Lake George area in 2013 or 2014. She added the rally was held in mid-July and the 2010 rally would be held in Redmond, Oregon.

Ms. Brand reviewed a list of successful leads, as follows:

- ▶ Mayne Travel located in Ontario, Canada had visited the area June 19-21, 2010 with 54 attendees;
- ▶ Bachman Foods located in Pennsylvania was planning a whitewater rafting trip for 100 employees for August 20-21, 2010;
- ▶ The New York State Bowling Proprietors Association would hold their annual meeting at The Georgian on July 10-11, 2010;
- ▶ A Request for Proposal was issued for the Dydyk Family Reunion to assist in negotiating a room rate for 100 people in July 2011;
- ▶ Indirect Travel would be attending the 2010 Adirondack Balloon Festival with 45 people staying 3 nights at The Georgian;
- ▶ Travel Wise Tours had booked a shopping trip for October 15, 2011 for 50 people from Watertown, New York; and

- ▶ Rotterdam Seniors had booked a lunch cruise and Rachel Ray itinerary for 50 people in July 2010.

Peter Girard, Creative Director, advised the Group Tour landing page of the website was in the process of being updated and a search bar had been added. He stated a web carousel was added to the website which allowed users to scroll through various features that were displayed three at a time. He reported the lakegeorgeny.com landing page, which was developed with the assistance of Ad Workshop, was beneficial in assisting with the collection of email addresses during trade shows. He added a laptop computer was set up to allow visitors to the booth to add their information to subscribe to the email and mailing lists and it had been used during Americade. He noted the Department continued to use a paper sign-up list at the trade shows, as well.

Mr. Girard displayed the most recent email blast to the Committee members and he reviewed the number of people each blast was emailed to. He explained for Memorial Day weekend the email blast had highlighted properties that offered military discounts. He noted the Facebook page was also promoted in an email blast and was utilized to communicate with 'fans'. He displayed sticker labels which had been developed for use in mailings. Mr. Girard apprised the fall brochure was in the production process and he displayed a draft of the cover image and noted one of the images on the cover had been derived from a video still.

Mr. Conover asked how many people received the Memorial Day email blast and Mr. Girard responded 105,000. Ms. Johnson noted the Fourth of July email blast had been released the previous day. Referring to a discussion at the previous Committee meeting, Mr. Conover mentioned the scanable icons on posters which individuals could scan using their smart phones to gain immediate access to a specific website. He questioned the length of time before the County had the ability to print the scanable icons on media produced. Mr. Girard said currently the process was being utilized by Six Flags and Ms. Johnson interjected that Six Flags was using the technology in Agawam, Massachusetts and Tom Connors of Ad Workshop would report on the success at the next Committee meeting. Mr. Girard said the Six Flags in Lake George, New York was promoting the use of smart phones for certain features offered at the park. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Girard reported the Facebook page continued to grow and currently had 1,300 fans. He said the page was utilized on a daily basis to provide updates on activities in the area. He advised the current post pertained to Adirondack Drums in the City of Glens Falls and the features of the Facebook site allowed for a direct link to other websites as needed.

Luisa Craige-Sherman, Executive Director of the Warren County Council of Chambers, reported that on June 23, 2010 the Council of Chambers held a Hospitality Seminar at The Fort William Henry in Lake George. She said there had been a panel of tourism professionals present and 32 attendees. She advised the June Council of Chambers dinner was held in the Town of Hague at the Northern Lake George Resort. She noted a presentation had been given on the Floating Classroom by a representative of the Lake George Association. She added Ms. Brand had attended to report on the details of the Velo Quebec Grand Tour. She said she did not have specific information on upcoming Council of Chambers meetings but she would provide the information as it became available.

Mr. Belden informed that a triathlon had been held in the Town of Hague on Saturday, June 26, 2010 and there had been 378 participants. He explained this was the third year of the event which had 75 participants the first year and 250 the second year.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Strainer and seconded by Mr. Conover, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist