

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
KENNY
DICKINSON
CONOVER
WOOD
VANSELOW

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
TANYA GRANT, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR STRAINER

SUPERVISORS BENTLEY
GIRARD
LOEB
MASON
TAYLOR
THOMAS

MIKE CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
ALICE GREYER, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM, CITY OF GLENS FALLS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
CHARLENE DI RESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:15 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mrs. Wood 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.*

Mr. Merlino and Ms. Johnson welcomed Messrs. Dickinson and Vanselow and Mrs. Wood to the Tourism Committee. For the benefit of the new Committee members, Ms. Johnson reviewed the agenda format.

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Benchmark Printing, Inc. to print 102,000 copies of the 2012 Rates & Dates & Events Brochure, for a term commencing February 22, 2012 and terminating March 30, 2012, in an amount not to exceed \$11,504.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Benchmark Printing, Inc. as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 17, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson presented a request for a transfer of funds in the amount of \$500 to cover the cost of EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization) co-pays as recommended by the County Treasurer's Office. Mr. Conover asked if the funds had been budgeted and Ms. Johnson replied in the negative.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to approve the request for a transfer of funds as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the Request for Transfer of Funds form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson requested a resolution to ratify her actions in signing an agreement with CTM Media Group, Inc., dated January 11, 2012, for brochure distribution at the Palisades Mall in West Nyack, New York. She advised she had signed the agreement via electronic signature and had neglected to obtain Committee approval prior to doing so.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to ratify the actions of the Director of Tourism as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 17, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson stated that due to the aforementioned agreement with CTM Media Group, Inc., Amy Bartlett, First Assistant County Attorney, had recommended a resolution which would authorize her to enter into and execute agreements with various vendors or contractors in amounts not to exceed \$2,000 per agreement.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to authorize the Director of Tourism to enter into and execute agreements with various vendors or contractors for services required in an amount not to exceed \$2,000. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the February 17, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson reported that the Consumer Shows commenced in January for the Tourism Department and a list of the 2012 Consumer Shows was displayed for the Committee members. She advised the shows selected were seasoned shows which were in the primary market area for Warren County Tourism. She stated the Tourism Department invited the tourism related businesses to send their brochures with the staff members who attended the shows at a rate of \$25 per show for 150 brochures. This year, she continued, there were 26 businesses who had elected to do so and she noted the Chambers of Commerce for each municipality were invited to send brochures at no cost.

Ms. Johnson displayed samples of the Department's pull-up displays to the Committee members and noted new photos were constantly added to their archive file to be used on advertising materials. She said the Department was attempting to cross market at the consumer shows to highlight the fact that Warren County was a four season destination. She commented the tag line for Warren County was "Four Great Seasons, One Outstanding Destination". She announced that the Department had previously purchased new hardware each time they produced a pull-up display; however, she added, a new vendor had been located who "re-skinned" the existing hardware to create new pull-up displays. Peter Girard, Creative Director, mentioned the pull-up displays were seven to eight feet tall and Ms. Johnson interjected the pull-up displays could be set at varying heights to accommodate table top displays.

Ms. Johnson stated that the Department had initiated "show only giveaways" in 2011, which offered consumers an opportunity to sign up to receive additional information while entering for a chance to win. She noted this was an additional means to build the email subscriber list which was currently in excess of 120,000 subscribers. She apprised the Tourism Department was not legally allowed to share the subscriber list with area businesses, so the "show only giveaway" was used as an opportunity to allow an area business to increase their email subscriber list, as well.

Ms. Johnson said Warren County was a member of the New York State Travel and Vacation Association which attended a wide variety of shows throughout the northeast. She added membership allowed the Department to participate in shows they were unable to attend through brochure distribution.

Ms. Johnson reported that the Annual Travel Guide was now being produced in CD (compact disc) format in order to accommodate consumers who did not wish to carry bulky materials at the consumer shows. She added the Department also used biodegradable bags at the consumer shows which were printed with the Warren County Tourism logo and were used to carry the various brochures which were distributed.

Ms. Johnson mentioned there were twenty locations on the New Jersey Transit Rail System where the Winter Poster had been placed during the month of January of 2012, as part of the Department's out-of-home advertising efforts and examples of the posters were displayed. She noted the posters included the logos for Gore Mountain, Hickory Hill and West Mountain Ski Resorts, as well as the logo for the Saratoga North Creek Railway (SNCR) and the Warren County Tourism Department's QR (Quick Response) Code. Ms. Johnson reported that three New York State Thruway Rest Area location kiosks, (Sloatsburg, New Baltimore and Plattekill), would have a static advertisement next to a video screen which would continuously play the Warren County Tourism Department Winter Video. She noted 30,000 Annual Travel Guides were distributed at the three New York State Thruway Rest Area locations in 2011.

Ms. Johnson displayed several print ads to the Committee members which were featured in various magazines. In addition to generic ads, she continued, the Department completed event advertising and through local special events that received Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding from the County. She added part of the Special Event Funding agreement was that Warren County Tourism be allowed up to one full page of advertising in the events advertising media. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Dickinson, Ms. Johnson replied the Department had a separate extension for each advertisement in order to track which ad the consumer was responding to. She commented that the Department responded to approximately 200,000 requests for information each year. Ms. Johnson reported the Winter Television Campaign had ended at the end of January and had featured a Winter Getaway Giveaway which included an overnight stay for two at the Copperfield Inn located in North Creek, two lift tickets for Gore Mountain Ski Resort and a certificate for two to visit the Adirondack Winery. Mr. Girard noted a different website address was used for the television ads in order to track the number of people directed to the website and he noted the television ads listed the website as www.lakegeorgeny.com, as opposed to www.visitlakegeorge.com.

Ms. Johnson displayed the Tourism Department Brochure Distribution Locations Map to the Committee members; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. She said the map was produced by Sheri Norton, GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Coordinator for the Planning & Community Development Department, and it showed the locations of brochure distribution within New York State. Ms. Johnson stated that Joanne Conley, Assistant Tourism Coordinator, was the Department's Public Relations Liaison and would begin compiling a monthly report pertaining to ad placements and press releases; *a copy of the January Public Relations Report is on file with the minutes*. Ms. Johnson noted the report also included responses to the HARO (Help a Reporter Out) website and media contacts and visits. Ms. Johnson commented on a mention in the *AAA Automobile Clubs Magazine* which contained a story on the Lake George Area and in *RoadRUNNER Motorcycle Touring & Travel Magazine* which featured an article on the Americade Motorcycle Rally and Adirondack Byways. She displayed the November edition of the Quarterly Newsletter and commented that it was intended for area tourism related businesses and was also emailed to media, local and State

Legislators. She added the next edition of the Quarterly Newsletter would be available in February. Ms. Johnson informed that she and Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, would attend the Tourism Action Day in Albany, New York on March 6, 2012 and the Empire State Tourism Conference on March 7, 2012. She noted a report on the 2011 Occupancy Surveys would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Brand briefly explained her position for the benefit of the new Committee members. She reported the 2011 Group Tour Survey had been sent to more than 65 facilities in order to receive feedback pertaining to group tour traffic in 2011. She added she would present a report on the results of the Survey at the next Committee meeting. She noted the Fort William Henry Resort usually had a high percentage of the Motorcoach traffic; however, she added, in 2011 the Resort only had six Motorcoach groups. Conversely, she reported the Algonquin Restaurant usually only handled a few Motorcoaches each year but had seen twenty Motorcoach groups in 2011. She apprised the December edition of the Group Loop Electronic Newsletter was sent to 3,836 industry contacts including tour operators, group leaders, travel agents, local Chambers of Commerce, Warren County Supervisors, local Legislators and local and national media. She added the Newsletter had been viewed by 747 of the recipients and positive feedback had been received. Ms. Brand displayed the 2012 schedule of in-State, out-of-State and Canada Motorcoach Trade Shows/Sales Blitz/Marketplaces for the Committee members and noted there were 17 shows. She stated that in 2012 she would focus on niche markets including bank clubs, senior citizens and senior affinity groups, year-round sports groups and student/youth groups.

Ms. Brand commented that additional pull-up displays had been produced relative to group tours and examples were displayed for the Committee members. She added she preferred pictures of group tours to be used on her pull-up displays. She reported the annual opportunity for Warren County businesses to participate in brochure distributions at Group Tour Shows had been sent and six businesses had opted to participate. She noted the brochure distribution program for the group tour shows was also \$25 per show for 150 brochures.

Ms. Brand announced she had attended the American Bus Association Marketplace on January 6-10, 2012 in Grapevine, Texas and had conducted 53 pre-scheduled appointments with tour operators, as well as 19 additional appointments for the Hampton Inn & Suites due to the representative needed to leave early for a family emergency. She advised that she provided ongoing assistance with the current itineraries and presented five new themed itineraries for future consideration. She commented that Warren County had also been represented by five hoteliers and one area attraction at the American Bus Association Marketplace.

Ms. Brand reported she had attended the Annual National Tour Association Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 5-9, 2011 and had conducted 32 pre-scheduled appointments with tour operators. She apprised Walking Adventures International, a tour operator from Vancouver, Washington, was interested in hosting their 2014 Reunion in this area, with a 14-day walking tour for 100 to 200 people. She said the tour would start in Saratoga, New York and end in Montreal, Canada. She advised she had also met with Voyages FQCC of Quebec, Canada who were interested in making Lake George the last stop of a 23-day RV (recreational vehicle) Tour. She added 44 RV's would stay at the Lake George Escape and select a restaurant for their final evening meal.

Ms. Brand informed that Anderson Coach, a Tour Operator based in Greenville, Pennsylvania, brought six motor coaches with over 300 passengers to the area as part of their two-day "Birthday Bash" to celebrate 74 years in business. Since then, she continued, Starr Tours and Transbridge had also booked Birthday Bashes for June of 2012.

Ms. Brand reported a full page Warren County co-op advertisement would be featured in the March edition of *Bus Tours Magazine* along with a two page feature article on Group Tour opportunities in the City of Glens Falls. She noted the outside back cover of the Magazine would offer a FAM (familiarization) Tour to group leaders to determine if the area was an appropriate destination for their group. Ms. Brand stated the Eastern Ski Writers Association Media Reception had been held at the Copperfield Inn on December 16, 2011. She added a Warren County Tourism booth had been set up in order to distribute brochures. She further added the booth was also used to collect additional media contacts and an additional FAM Tour was offered.

Ms. Brand informed that she and Mr. Girard would provide a Power Point Presentation at the February Warren County Council of Chambers dinner meeting to discuss the 2012 marketing plans. She said she was in the process of updating the Meeting Site Planner and working on leads. She noted she had forwarded some leads to Mike Consuelo, Special Events Coordinator for the Lake George Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB).

Mr. Girard stated that as the Creative Director he worked closely with Ms. Johnson and Ms. Brand to craft the messages in the ads. He displayed a variety of print ads for the Committee members and reiterated the tag line was "Four Great Seasons, One Outstanding Destination". He displayed the White Water Rafting Brochure for the Committee members and noted it was recently developed. He displayed the recent email blasts for the Committee members and commented the email blasts were released at a rate of once per month with two per month in the busier summer months. He advised the email subscriber list fluctuated and was currently 120,000. He noted the email blasts were tracked for the first three days following their release.

Mr. Girard displayed the new VisitLakeGeorge.com website and noted it had been launched at the end of November of 2011. He advised the new Drupal format allowed the Tourism Department to manage website content in-house and he demonstrated the ease of use for the Committee members. He stated the amount of time necessary to change content on the website was greatly reduced by switching to the Drupal format. He noted the year round Warren County Tourism video was embedded on the home page of the website. Ms. Johnson interjected it was the same video which had been produced for use on the Glens Fall Civic Center screens.

Mr. Consuelo distributed copies of his Monthly Activity Report to the Committee members and welcomed the three new members to the Tourism Committee; *a copy of the report is on file with the minutes*. He explained for the benefit of the new Committee members that there was a contract in place between Warren County and the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and CVB for the services of the Special Events Coordinator. To date, he continued, the majority of business which had been brought in by his position was generated and geared towards individual hotel properties. He added the next large event would be the Centurion Cycling Event in June of 2012. He noted the Event would impact all of Warren County with riders traveling through most of the Towns and Villages. He apprised the Monthly Activity Report listed definite leads booked, tentative leads and new leads generated. He noted some of the leads had been generated through Ms. Brand.

Mr. Consuelo apprised of the Motorcycle Sports Touring Association which had contracted with the Fort William Henry Resort for a June 11-14, 2011 event which had been garnered during the Americade Motorcycle Rally. He noted the Living Church of God had viewed several prospective areas and had determined that Warren County was not right for their event. Conversely, he added, the United Church of God had chosen the Lake George Forum for their September 30-October 8, 2012 event. He reported the Boy Scouts of America had received proposals and were in the process of reviewing them for their 2014 or 2015 event. Mr. Dickinson asked the number of participants

expected from the Boy Scouts of America and Mr. Consuelo replied approximately 100 people and added it was the Boy Scouts of America Retirees Association. He advised the Modular Space Corporation had chosen Lake Placid as the venue for their January 2012 event. RPI (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), he continued had contracted with the Queensbury Hotel for their April 2012 event. He said work continued on assisting the Big Apple Circus with their decision in choosing Lake George as a possible future venue. He added the representatives from the Big Apple Circus would meet the following week with their Board of Directors to make a final decision. He noted the event would be held July 14-28, 2012.

Mr. Merlino noted a column listing the source of the leads had been added to Mr. Consuelo's Monthly Activity Report. Mr. Consuelo reported there were two candidates for the Special Event Coordinator position who had been interviewed and would be called for second interviews. He said the two candidates would also meet with Mr. Merlino, Mr. Kenny and Ms. Johnson.

Pertaining to the Warren County Council of Chambers update, Mr. Consuelo reported a dinner meeting was scheduled Wednesday, February 8, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at East Cove Restaurant in the Town of Lake George. He said a strategy session would be held on Monday, February 6, 2012 with some of the Council delegates. Mr. Merlino suggested the new Supervisors should attend the dinner meeting on February 8, 2012 and noted some of the current Supervisors attended as often as possible.

Mr. Merlino stated there were no pending items this month. He mentioned that the Mayor of the City of Glens Falls had called several members of the Board of Supervisors out onto the ice during an Adirondacks Phantoms game at the Glens Falls Civic Center to thank the Board for their support, through Occupancy Tax Special Event Funding, which assisted in the purchase of the new video screens.

Mr. Kenny suggested the fact that Warren County had the lowest sales tax in New York State should be included in all of the advertising.

Under new business, Ms. Johnson said, was a report on local tourism in the Town of Queensbury from Mr. Strainer; however, she added, since Mr. Strainer was absent, the report would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Dickinson reported he would be a guest DJ on WQAR 101.3 FM on Sunday, February 5, 2012 to discuss the Lake George Area. He asked if there was anything that he could mention while on the air and Ms. Johnson requested he mention the website, www.visitlakegeorge.com.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mrs. Wood, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist