

MINUTES

DUTCHESS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Tourism Committee

**Thursday, September 16, 2010, 8:30 a.m.
EDC Conference Room
3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, NY**

Present: D. DiNapoli, B. Grems, H. Lavarnway, J. D'Alessandro, L. Hubbard, B. Krevolin, C. Laube, G. Mure, C. North, L. Pensiero, S. Rector, E. Hayes, G. Mure, M. Kangas,

Absent: K. Hansen, P. Feder, D. Garry, S. DeKrey, A. Meagher, B. Pagano, J. Reynolds S. Turk.

Staff Present: J. MacEnroe, M. K. Vrba, L. Higginson, D. Hopper, F. Lauricella, N. Lutz

Welcome, Mary Kay Vrba

The regular meeting of the Tourism Committee was called to order by Mary Kay Vrba at 8:40 a.m. Mary Kay welcomed the committee and announced that Mary Wright was out on medical leave. The minutes of the July 15, 2010, Tourism Committee meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Diane DiNapoli, duly seconded by Benjamin Krevolin, and with all in favor, the motion carried.

Director's Report, Mary Kay Vrba

- Mary Kay read from a letter from the Dept. of Planning stating there was no need to submit a budget as we were unfunded for next year. J. MacEnroe observed we received the gentler of two possible letters sent to contract agencies, but assured us the Dutchess County Executive recognizes the importance of our services and economic development. Members may be called upon to lobby county legislators on our behalf. Tourism is up as indicated by the half-year 5.9% increase in the bed tax— from 2009. DCEDC recently succeeded in attracting an new medical technology business
- Travel Guide - ad sales begin October 2 and the project to update the listings is also underway. Farms and culinary arts move to the forefront to highlight the bounty of Dutchess this year. Restaurants must pay to be included in the Guide's directory
- Trains station - signage and display cases at the Poughkeepsie train station are under review and some of the white space needs painting. There's a new map of the Walkway district and a rackcard. Oct. 2 marks the Walkway's first anniversary, highlighted by family fun activities.
- New Sightseeing Boat - Syracuse area based Seaway Navigation & Tours will operate in Poughkeepsie from the dock near the Ice House in Waryas Park starting next spring. They accommodate 80 passengers.
- Radio spots are running on 92.1FM and the director is interviewed weekly by Joe Daily on events and things to do in Dutchess County and the Hudson Valley.
- BLT - Beacon Local Transit shuttle is working with Fishkill hotels to transport visitors to Dia: Beacon and Main St. attractions. The van fills up very quickly. Grants are sought to continue next year.
- ESTO - Mary Kay attended the recent US Travel conference on destination marketing vs. managing organizations. There was discussion of social media and budgets. She also received a scholarship to attend a culinary tourism conference in Halifax, with additional support from Valley Table, Hudson Valley Agriculture Business, Gigi's Trattoria and Judy LaBelle.
- The WebCam, used to spotlight the Walkway during the Quadricentennial, was donated to the

- Children's Media Project by the IDA
- May 9 Tourism Conference - save this date for a spring conference, hosted jointly with Ulster County, tentatively set at the new Trump Golf Course in Hopewell Junction.
- Kaatsbaan will host a showcase of their dance arts for area hoteliers to get better acquainted with their work.
- Hudson Valley Tourism - HVEDC, Scenic Hudson and transportation partners such as Stewart Airport, for a total of nine groups, are sitting down together to look at maximizing regional partnerships and resources. Four groups examine four themes. Hudson Valley Heritage weekend will be May 14-15, 2011.

Staff Reports - DCT Staff

Nancy Lutz, Communications Manager

- Publicity - More than 100 spotlight features on the website have been read by more than 36,000 visitors. See other stats on Fred's report.
- Social Media - 370 people like us on Facebook, and 880 follow us on Twitter.
- Sent out news releases on the Dutchess County Fair; Boxing: Rumble at Renegades; and Farm Fresh Fall Getaways, to more than 300 regional and 65 local media.
- Articles: Travel & Leisure magazine, New York magazine, The Baltimore Sun, New York Daily News and the Albany Times Union have features on Dutchess County fall getaways.
- CIA Fam Tour – The two-day farm to table fam tour hosted with The CIA last week was attended by nine journalists last week and was very successful. We plan to repeat it in 2011.

Dawn Hopper, Tour and Travel Marketing Manager

- Experiential Video – still filming the video with experiential sites, but has expanded to include programs with others, including behind the scenes activities, for additional angles.
- Group Tour magazine - ad and advertorial appears in recent issue.
- Just Say Go package deals -when submitting these, include expiration date.
- AARP Convention – Leaving soon for trade show in Orlando, Florida, with Westchester County Tourism.

Lydia Higginson, Deputy Director

- Farm Fresh program - has 700 reservations for October tours. Metro-North sold 169 packages to the Dutchess County Fair with shuttle bus; 464 took the shuttle to the fairgrounds.
- Victoria Simons Locovore Award - Attended the Columbia County Fair, as Dutchess County Tourism was named a finalist for this new award, named for the late Vicki Simons who spearheaded the Columbia & Dutchess County Bounty programs. The Red Lion Inn was selected as the winner this year.
- Kaatsbaan showcase and cocktail party will be Oct. 27.
- New TIC now open at the Hyde Park marina for those visiting by boat.

Fred Lauricella, E-Tourism Information Services Manager

- Website Statistics – Reported on website statistics:

<u>Site Stats:</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>
Visitors to site	45,727	40,604
Page views	18.9	22.9
2009 Travel Guide PDF downloads	61	86
900 events on Calendar; page views	4,159	3,251

New Business/Comments

- Bob Grems –Dutchess County Fair drew 143,069 paid attendees and 325,481 in total. Buses served visitors from Rye, and Westchester and Long Island towns. Partnerships are vital. The upcoming Craft Fair has some vendor cancelations, as the circuit is not doing well nationally.
- Diane DiNapoli – B&Bs' occupancy is up and so is length of stay. Would like to see more regional pr. Affordability and access are key; convenience and transportation links are critical
- Linda Hubbard – New welcome center open in Beacon; now training volunteers to staff it with our assistance. Lots of in-kind business donations. Now there's a Third Saturday Rhinebeck .Art I the Loft is open at Millbrook Winery. 80 Beacon artists open their studios for tours. Mill St. Loft event honors B. Krevolin & John Paxton on Oct. 21. Vote for Pepsi Challenge grant for Red Arts Barn, with Scenic Hudson.
- Benjamin Krevolin - Vote online for the DC Fair Plein air Paint Out artworks. Top 5 to be used in 2011 DC Fairgrounds promotions (thanks, Bob Grems!). Cunneen-Hackett has them displayed til 10/27. Fall arts festival cancelled again but "One River, Many Streams" part of Spirit of Beacon Day on 9/26. Hudson River School of Art opening in Madrid Spain is opportunity for co-op promotions and reciprocal brochure and promotional pr exchanges.
- Cliff Laube – FRD Library & Museum renovation continues on schedule; museum will never be closed. New exhibit opens, "Our Plain Duty..." on the 75th anniversary of Social Security. They have an exciting acquisition there of the Grace Tully papers and Daisy Suckley letters that formed the basis for the book "Closest Companion".
- J. D'Alessandro,- Hotel Sierra, July occupancy was up. Re the BLT shuttle, the van is too small, nit a 15-passenger van a needed. Way too small for families and Fishkill taxis are not really a good option, even to the train station. Need a car service.
- Elaine Hayes - Mount Gulian's new programs bring freed slave James Brown and the daughter of Verplancks to life in "From Slave to Mr. Brown" and "Kindred Spirits", as well as in-character interaction with visitors. Two area actors perform several Sundays in the fall and February. Please attend premiere on Friday, Oct. 8; includes cocktails reception It is the result of a grant, which included dollars for marketing.
- Ginny Mure – Escoffier Room finished being renovated and updated in a new style.
- Maureen Kangas - now free to say 30-40 rooms were utilized by news media here for the Clinton wedding in July. Shadows One water taxi off to a slow start but has picked up a lot. Bonura Hospitality is their new company name, and Rolling Greens operates the Dutchess Golf & Country Club. The Grandview is sold out on weekends through next year. Riverfront is busy and they are using their additional vans, trolleys and shuttles to capacity all the time.

Closing Remarks

The next regular meeting of the Tourism Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, November 18, 2010, at 8:30 a.m., in the EDC Conference Room, 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, New York.**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.