

## MINUTES

### **DUTCHESS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Tourism Committee**

**Thursday, September 17, 2009, 8:30 a.m.  
EDC Conference Room  
3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, NY**

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**Present:** L. Bassanese, B. Grems, K. Hansen, E. Hayes, L. Hulcoop, L. Hubbard, B. Krevolin, S. Matyas, C. North, S. Rector, S. Turk, D. VanBuren

**Absent:** A. Cross, S. DeKrey, S. Evans, P. Feder, M. Kangas, A. Meagher, G. Mure, B. Pagano, L. Pensiero, J. Reynolds

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

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#### **Welcome, Chair's Report, Denise VanBuren**

The regular meeting of the Tourism Committee was called to order by Denise VanBuren, Chair, at 8:35 a.m. Denise offered congratulations to Linda Hubbard for winning a Dutchess County Executive -Arts Award. The DCEDC BEA Awards will be November 12, 2009, 5:30 pm, at the Grandview in Poughkeepsie. The Dutchess400.com website lists Quad events, including "Light On New Netherland" exhibit showcased at four locations in Dutchess County: Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home, Hyde Park; Lathrop Center, Lakeside Park in Pawling; Morton Memorial Library in Rhinecliff; and Beacon Institute for Rivers & Estuaries, Denning's Point in Beacon.

#### **Director's Report, Mary Kay Vrba**

- **Matching Funds** – Meeting with Dennis Mullen, Chairman and CEO of NYS Empire State Development in New York City to encourage support for New York State funding.
- **Attendance at Sites:**
  - Bedtax is down 15%; overnights are down but day trips are up..
  - FDR Presidential Library & Museum up 5%.
  - Dia is up.
  - Barton Orchards and other agri-tourism sites are up.
  - CIA groups are down but independents are up.
  - Splashdown is down 10%.
  - DC Fairgrounds is up.
  - Mount Gulian numbers are up for tourism, but especially for weddings.
  - Arts attendance are up.
- **Walkway Over the Hudson:**
  - Opening is October 2 & 3, 2009.
  - 80 car parking lot on Parker Avenue has been completed.
  - City of Poughkeepsie developed a website ([www.cityofpoughkeepsie.com/walkway](http://www.cityofpoughkeepsie.com/walkway)) outlining information for parking and shuttle service for the opening weekend.
  - Jumbotron – donations were raised to fund a Jumbotron for Sat. for people at Waryas Park to view the opening ceremonies on the Walkway on Saturday.
  - Walkway will open to the public at 3:00 pm on Saturday

**Staff Report - DCT Staff**

*Lydia Higginson, Deputy Director*

- Seven weekends have been scheduled for the Metro North Farm Fresh tours with Hudson River Valley Tours running the shuttle service.
- Lehigh Barge and Pegasus Circus event was held at Waryas Park in September.
- The Hudson Valley Garden of Eating Tour, a co-op marketing event involving Dutchess County, Columbia County, Albany County and Rensselaer County, was offered at different restaurants and lodgings in these four counties.

*Nancy Lutz, Communications Manager*

- Attended Travel Media Showcase in Montgomery, Alabama, in early September. The showcase was geared towards media – attendees were very aware of the Walkway Over the Hudson.
- Printed 25,000 copies of Fall Happenings event calendar in color and distributed to tourism businesses and information centers.
- The new New York State website launch is tentatively schedule for November 1, 2009.
- Beginning process for verifying & updating information in the travel guide for publication in Spring 2010.

*Dawn Hopper, Tour & Travel Marketing Manager*

- Attended Destinations of New York Receptive Exchange in New York City in July. Very productive resulting in high number of tours with good interest in experiential tours. Clermont reported a 22% increase in tours.
- Experiential tours will be featured in NTA's Courier Magazine this Fall.
- There has been an increase in visitors to "Just Say Go Getaway Deals" on the DCT website.

*Fred Lauricella, E-Tourism Information Services Manager*

- Website Statistics – Reported on website statistics:

<b>Site Stats:</b>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>
Visitors to site	51,314	46,353
2007 Travel Guide:		
PDF downloads:	120	112
FarmFresh page visitors:	452	482
Events Calendar downloads	232	104

Developing new DutchessTourism.com webpage design, 90% complete.

June was peak visitor month for Dutchess400.com site.

Twitter – spotlight articles are placed on Dutchess County Tourism twitter. Currently about 50 people follow the DCT twitter site.

**Old Business/Comments**

- Bob Grems – approximately 450,000 people attended the Dutchess County Fair this year.
- Elaine Hayes – Mount Gulian received a \$106,000 two-year grant for researching the story of James F. Brown, a slave.
- Denise VanBuren – asked the committee to think about 2010 and how can we sustain interest in Dutchess County following the Quad celebration this year – maybe continue to tap in Dutch tourism with an annual festival or promotion.

**Closing Remarks**

The next regular meeting of the Tourism Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, November 19, 2009, at 8:30 a.m., in the EDC Conference Room, 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, New York.**

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.