

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: MARCH 30, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
KENNY
BELDEN
STRAINER
GOODSPEED
MCCOY
CONOVER

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER

DANIEL STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY/ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD

SUPERVISORS LOEB
TAYLOR
THOMAS
WOOD

MIKE CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

BLAKE JONES, *THE POST STAR*

CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:22 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. McCoy 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 authorization for a supplemental agreement with Working Pictures, Inc. for post production work associated with the Jimmer Fredette commercial in the amount of \$2,480; and a supplemental agreement with Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop to purchase air time for the Jimmer Fredette commercial in the amount of \$31,570.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. McCoy and carried unanimously to authorize the supplemental agreements with Working Pictures, Inc. and Lake Placid Advertisers Workshop as outlined above. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the April 15, 2011 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested to amend the Warren County Tourism Policy concerning publication of advertisements. She said the Policy had been amended many times and she and Patricia Nenner, Second Assistant County Attorney, had reviewed the policy in order to update it further; *a copy of the proposed amended policy is on file with the minutes.*

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to amend the Warren County Tourism Policy concerning publication of advertisements. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the April 15, 2011 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson displayed the 2010 Year In Review Binder to the Committee members; *a copy of which is on file with the minutes*. She explained the Department had been producing a Year In Review Binder since 1993 and it included valuable information, such as advertising activities, the marketing plan, samples of advertisements and copies of press releases. Concerning the Year in Review Binder, Ms. Johnson reported the following:

- ▶ the Department had increased the number of email subscribers from 86,898 in 2007 to 119,686 in 2010;
- ▶ a copy of the Binder was retained in the Tourism Department Office, if any of the Committee members wanted to review it further;
- ▶ the occupancy survey was not included in the Binder as it was in the process of being completed by the Planning & Community Development Department;
- ▶ no matching funds had been received from the State in 2010;
- ▶ the Warren County Tourism website had increased traffic with 480,000 visits in 2010 compared to 430,000 in 2009 and added the average visitor spent 4 ½ minutes browsing the website in 2010;
- ▶ retired senior volunteers had worked in the Tourism Department for 350 hours in 2010; and
- ▶ the Winter Television Campaign had generated a 29% increase in responses compared to the 2009 Winter Campaign.

Ms. Johnson displayed the "Decks of the Lake George Area in New York's Adirondacks" poster and distributed copies to the Committee members. She noted it was the fourth poster produced by the Department and 10,000 copies had been printed. She explained the poster highlighted area decks where visitors could mingle or dine and copies had been sent to each of the Chambers of Commerce, Senator Little's Office and Assemblywoman Sayward's Office. She said the poster would be included on the website with links to the websites of the participants.

Ms. Johnson distributed copies of the 2011 Events & Activities Placemat to the Committee members; *a copy of the Placemat is on file with the minutes*. She apprised that more than 300 events and activities were highlighted from April through September 2011 and copies were distributed to area restaurants to allow the wait staff the ability to tell their customers about the events and activities available to them. She mentioned the Department would also produce a winter placemat this year.

Ms. Johnson displayed the 2011 Rates and Dates Brochure which included activities and events from April through September 2011; *a copy of the brochure is on file with the minutes*. She said the brochure was currently being distributed and noted that 110,000 copies had been printed. She commented that the brochure listed over 700 events and activities and the cover had been re-designed by Peter Girard, Creative Director.

Ms. Johnson reported that Lakes Region Fishing had produced two episodes that highlighted fishing on Lake George. She said she had received a Google Alert last October stating that the episodes would be produced on dock fishing and lake fishing on Lake George. She stated the Department had contacted the producers to offer assistance; however, she added, the segments had already been filmed. She noted the two segments would air at different times from January through June 2011 on the Sportsman Channel. She said a link to the Warren County Tourism website had been included on the Lakes Region Fishing website. She advised the segments not only featured fishing on Lake George, they also discussed activities and attractions in the area. She continued by saying the producers would complete additional filming in 2011 and the Tourism Department would assist them in their efforts. Mr. Girard played the introduction to one of the two episodes from Lakes Region Fishing for the Committee members and Ms. Johnson stated she would distribute copies of the DVD

containing the two episodes to the Committee members following the meeting; *A copy of the DVD containing Lakes Region Fishing - Fishing Lake George Episodes 5 and 12 is on file with the minutes.*

Brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Johnson announced she had attended Senator Little's "think tank" on tourism at West Mountain Ski Resort and the Tourism Industry Coalition Government Action Day in Albany, New York where Senator Little had also been present. She explained the Government Action Day was an opportunity to meet with legislators to discuss important issues pertaining to the tourism industry. She added that top on the list of issues was the desire to keep the Welcome Centers open and funded in the State budget and the release of the New York State matching funds. She said she also attended the Empire State Tourism Conference in Albany, New York which was hosted by the New York State Travel and Vacation Association and featured Lieutenant Governor Robert Murphy as a speaker who had announced the New York State Matching Funds would be released shortly. Ms. Johnson announced that she had been informed that Warren County was number one on the list for release of the funds. Ms. Johnson stated she had met with a representative from the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce to discuss making the Warren County Tourism website link more visible on their website. She advised the County Attorney's Office was working on the contract for advertising on the Glens Falls Civic Center screens and a presentation of the proposed 90 second commercial had been made.

Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, reviewed in detail the Group Tour and Meeting/Convention Update which was included in the agenda packet. She said a 2010 Group Tour Survey had been distributed to approximately 93 businesses to assist in evaluating motorcoach traffic, but only 5 completed surveys were returned to the Office. She apprised the Department was currently offering brochure distribution services at specific travel shows and 10 local businesses and hoteliers had signed up for the program. She said The Group Loop Newsletter was a new email blast that would be distributed on a quarterly basis to over 8,000 tour operators, group leaders and travel agents.

Ms. Brand reported a FAM (familiarization) tour was hosted on March 24-25, 2011 for 12 international tour operators and travel agents from Tel Aviv, Israel. She said the FAM tour was joined by representatives from I Love NY and Kay New Century Tours and showcased Glens Falls, Lake George and Lake Luzerne. She announced a meeting had been held pertaining to the geotourism project between the Lakes to Locks Passage and National Geographic Maps. She explained that Lakes to Locks Passage and National Geographic Maps had launched a new website with an innovative map which was designed to highlight cultural, historical and recreational attractions and events along the Lakes to Locks Passage. She said the Lake George Land Conservancy introduced a new multi-municipal program to enhance recreational tourism in the area by promoting hiking and biking opportunities.

Ms. Brand stated the owners of Railroads on Parade were invited to the Tourism Department Office to discuss marketing ideas and promotional opportunities. Mr. Strainer interjected that a very impressive presentation had been given by Railroads on Parade at the last Warren County Council of Chambers Dinner. Ms. Brand noted the 2011 Meeting Site Planner had been updated and a new cover had been designed by Mr. Girard. She listed the confirmed upcoming events as follows: Anderson Coach's 44th Birthday Bash on September 13-16, 2011 which had 5 buses confirmed thus far; and the United States Racing Association (USRA) Half Marathon and 5K Race on April 24, 2011 which had 230 confirmed entries thus far.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Girard reported that work on updating the new and improved Drupal website had been ongoing since January. He mentioned he was working with L&P Media to organize the website and he displayed the site architecture to the Committee members. He advised he was also working with the Information Technology (IT) Department to access the necessary files. He stated the design and appearance of the site would be completed in-house.

Mr. Girard commented that the Tourism Department had been sending out News Bulletins on a quarterly basis for the last year and he displayed the most recent version for the Committee members. He explained the News Bulletins contained information, such as travel trends, articles about the tourism industry and coupon programs.

Mr. Conover asked if the possibility of a library to allow access to media produced by the Department had ever been considered. Mr. Girard responded that images had been archived in order to be used as they are requested and they had discussed the possibility of creating a means for communities to download the images from the website. Ms. Johnson noted there was a section of the website that allowed the press to download images and if video was required the Department was easily contacted. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Girard commented that a recent email blast had promoted the Travel Guide, group touring and Facebook and a second email blast informed of the Whitewater Rafting Giveaway; he displayed the email blasts for the Committee members. Ms. Johnson noted the Girlfriend Getaways had partnered with the Tourism Department for the Whitewater Rafting Giveaway email blast. Mr. Strainer pointed out the logo for the EDC (Economic Development Corporation) was represented in the corner of the email blast and he asked if this was a recent addition. Ms. Johnson responded that the EDC and the CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau) had been offered an opportunity to add content to the email blasts. Mr. Girard stated the cover of the Fishing and Boating Map had been re-designed and was currently being printed.

Lastly, Mr. Girard displayed some images that had been captured by staff members and played the new Jimmer Fredette commercial for the Committee members. Mr. Girard advised the commercial had first aired during the game of the week and was aired two additional times during the first and second games of the tournament. Mr. McCoy asked how many inquiries had been generated by the commercial and Ms. Johnson replied there had been no significant increase in requests for information and noted the increase had been minimal with some people indicating they had viewed the commercial.

Mike Consuelo, Special Events Coordinator for the the Lake George Regional CVB, distributed a Monthly Activity Report to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. He reported it had been a busy month for the CVB due to the consumer market and as a result of the trade shows. Like Ms. Johnson, he said, he had also had an opportunity to attend the Tourism Industry Coalition Government Action Day and the Empire State Tourism Conference. He commented that both events had presented opportunities to network and receive information about various destinations to determine the possibility of partnerships. Mr. Consuelo advised he met continually with the New York State Association of CVB's to determine ways to increase tourism in New York State. He announced he would attend a National Women's Show this weekend in Montreal, Canada with literature on this area to promote women's getaway weekends. He reported he was close to signing an agreement with the New York Society of Association Executives who intended to hold their summer retreat at the Sagamore Resort. Mr. Consuelo announced he had met with the organizer of the Wagon Fest which was a car show for Volkswagons and other German vehicles and the organizer would schedule a FAM tour to look at potential sites for the event.

Mr. Consuelo said the highlight of his month had been planning for the preview ride of the Centurion Cycling Event this coming June, as well as the inaugural ride in 2012. He apprised that productive meetings had been held with the Sheriff's Department, DPW (Department of Public Works) and the NYS DOT (New York State Department of Transportation) to work on the details pertaining to security and road closures. Mr. Consuelo said a media launch had been held on Thursday, March 24, 2011 with guest speakers to introduce the Centurion Cycling Event. He reported he would attend the Adirondack Sports and Fitness Expo at the Saratoga City Center.

Mr. Conover opined the Centurion Cycling Event would increase tourism in Warren County during the shoulder season. Mr. Merlino asked when the kickoff event for the Centurion Cycling Event would be held and Mr. Consuelo replied June 26, 2011. Mr. Merlino opined the Centurion Cycling Event would be beneficial to Warren County.

Mr. Consuelo said he would meet with the representatives of the Adirondack Balloon Festival to assist them with scheduling of other events during the same time period. He announced that the Golf for Tourism Day would be held on May 25, 2011 at the Sagamore Resort.

Mr. Strainer stated he had attended the last Warren County Council of Chambers Dinner at The Well's House in Pottersville, New York and representatives from the Centurion Cycling Event had been in attendance. He reported that all of the Chambers of Commerce had brought many programs to their communities and announced the next Warren County Council of Chambers Dinner would be held at Ciro's Restaurant in Lake Luzerne, New York. Mr. Merlino said he had attended the Dinners for the last 25 years and he suggested Ms. Brand as a representative to the Council of Chambers from the Tourism Department. Brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Johnson mentioned there was a pending item pertaining to the possibility of consolidating the services of the Creative Director as suggested by Jack Diamond, Mayor of the City of Glens Falls. She said a survey had been prepared and sent to the individual Towns, the City of Glens Falls and the Village of Lake George. She reported she had received responses from the Town of Horicon and the Village of Lake George, both of whom were not interested in consolidating services.

Mr. Kenny announced that he followed the Smith Travel Report closely and over the last six months tourism in Warren County had been increased with the exception of one week in February.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist