



**Tourism Committee  
Warren County Tourism Department  
AGENDA  
February 27, 2018**

Committee Members:

- E. Merlino, Chairman
- D. Dickinson
- J. Strough
- E. Frasier
- K. Wild
- K. Geraghty
- J. Diamond
- A. Hogan
- B. Driscoll

- 
- I. Committee meeting called to order by Chairman Merlino.
  - II. Motion to approve minutes of January 26, 2018 Tourism Committee Meeting.
  - III. Action Agenda

**Resolution Requests**

- 1. **Request to fill a vacant position – Assistant Tourism Coordinator**  
Funds for this position are in the budget.  
**Rationale:** Position has been vacant for three months; previous employee did not return after Maternity Leave.  
**Attachment #1**

- IV. Department Updates – Joanne Conley, Tourism Director
- V. Motorcoach and Group Tour Marketing Plan 2018 – Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter
- VI. Privilege of the Floor to discuss any additional items to come before Committee.
- VII. Motion to adjourn.

**Attachment #1**

Resolution Request – Fill a vacant position – Assistant Tourism Coordinator

# RESOLUTION REQUEST FORM NO. 12

Schedule "A"

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILL VACANT POSITION

This notice of intent is filed whenever a department head plans to fill an *existing* funded position in their budget that is vacated due to a retirement, resignation, termination or promotion. This notice may not be used for requests to create a *new* position. *For complete instructions on the procedure to be followed, see the reverse of this form.*

### DEPARTMENT HEAD COMPLETES THIS SECTION

Department: TOURISM Payroll Dept. No: 53.03  
Title of Position: Assistant Tourism Coordinator Base Salary of Position: \$44,082 Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Filling at Step # (If Known): \_\_\_\_\_  
Budget code and title: A.6417.0001 110 Union  Non-Union   
This position is vacated due to:  Retirement  Resignation  Termination  Promotion  Other  
Employee No./Last Name: 12974/Coon Date of Vacancy: 11/27/17  
Is this position mandated?  Yes  No Is the position reimbursable?  Yes  No  
Source of reimbursement:  Federal \_\_\_\_\_%  State \_\_\_\_\_%  Other \_\_\_\_\_%

### CIVIL SERVICE STATUS AND HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR APPROVAL

Competitive-active eligible list  Competitive-no list (*hiring would be provisional*)  Non-Competitive  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Actual Impact to Budget Report will be provided monthly by Human Resources Director.  
Candidate's qualifications must be approved by Personnel Officer prior to hiring. \_\_\_\_\_  
Human Resources Director has approved this form when initialed. \_\_\_\_\_

### COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR COMPLETES THIS SECTION

The Administrator has no objection to the filling of the vacancy.  
 The Administrator objects to the filling of the vacancy.

Administrator Signature [Signature] Date 2/23/18

### BUDGET OFFICER COMPLETES THIS SECTION

The Budget Officer has no objection to the filling of the vacancy.  
 The Budget Officer objects to the filling of the vacancy.

Budget Officer Signature [Signature] Date 2/22/18

### SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE COMPLETES THIS SECTION

Name of Committee \_\_\_\_\_  
 The committee has no objection to the filling of the vacancy.  
 The committee objects to the filling of the vacancy.  
 In the case of an emergency, Committee Chair has no objection to the filling of the vacancy.  
 In the case of an emergency, Committee Chair objects to the filling of the vacancy.

Ranking Committee Member Signature [Signature] Date 2/27/2018

## **ASSISTANT TOURISM COORDINATOR**

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:** An incumbent in this position is responsible for assisting higher level administrators with day to day Department functions and operations. The work includes responsibility for oversight of the Department's database/ inquiry systems, research of current tourism data, trends and statistics as well as creating, maintaining and updating promotional materials. The work is performed under the direction of a higher level administrator. Supervision is exercised over subordinate staff. Does related work as required.

### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:** (Illustrative only)

- Assists a higher level administrator in ongoing promotion programs of the Tourism Department;
- Assists in creating and implementing programs, services, activities, and public events designed to promote tourism;
- Oversees the tourism database as it relates to business partner information, website integration and inquiry systems as well as Adirondack Regional and New York State databases;
- Contributes/edits copy and promotional material for print, digital, social and other related media, including coordination of annual travel guides;
- Researches the latest industry data, trends and statistics and reports findings and recommendations to higher level administrators;
- Supervises the day-to-day functions of subordinate staff;
- Represents the County at various meetings, conferences, travel shows and other tourism promotion and community events;
- Assists in maintaining positive relationships with local business partners, the public news media and public officials;
- Recommends and consults with higher level administrators on utilization of tourism related revenue and program delivery;
- May oversee Department operations, as assigned, in the absence of higher level administrators;
- May perform other office related duties, as necessary, to meet Department requirements.

**FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGES, SKILLS ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:** Good knowledge of the principles, methods and techniques used in tourism marketing and promotion activities in Warren County; good knowledge of the geographical attractions and activities of Warren County; working knowledge of management and administrative practices and procedures; working knowledge of producing promotional material across a broad spectrum of existing and emerging platforms; ability to establish and maintain good working relationships with employees, officials, businesses and members of the public; ability to communicate effectively in writing, verbally, and using multiple media sources; ability to plan and supervise the work of others; ability to effectively use office computer applications and database software; good judgment; physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** Either:

- (a) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a bachelor's degree and two (2) years of experience in a position dealing with public relations; publicity or tourism promotion, hotel management, restaurant management; or closely related field, or
- (b) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with an Associate's degree and four (4) years of experience in a position dealing with public relations; publicity or tourism promotion, hotel management, restaurant management; or closely related field.

Warren County Civil Service  
Adopted, Warren County Personnel, June 2, 2004  
Amended:6/21/16, \_\_\_\_\_  
JC: Competitive

Assistant Tourism Coordinator, Page 2 of 2

v.08.24.2016

**TRAVEL TRADE 2018 MARKETING PLAN**  
**MOTORCOACH/GROUP TOUR/INTERNATIONAL**

**MOTORCOACH INTRODUCTION**

In an annual survey of travel forecasts and trends, the tour operator members of the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) report a strikingly positive outlook for the motorcoach industry in the year ahead. Nearly 95% percent of USTOA Tour Operator members anticipate continued growth in sales for year ending in 2018, with over two-thirds (64 percent) of members forecasting a “boom year” with growth anywhere from seven to ten percent or higher. USTOA attributes this upswing in group travel to an improving economy, consumer confidence, improved marketing, growth in the number of passengers in 2017 and increasing staff in 2018.<sup>1</sup>

The Group Tour Division of the Tourism Department plans to capitalize on this optimistic forecast by implementing a strong marketing strategy to facilitate and increase motorcoach tourism to Warren County while remaining competitive in the New York State group tour marketplace.

The following strategies outline the method of reaching that 2018 goal:

**Travel Trade Emerging Market Segments**

- Baby Boomers
- Educators & Students
- Women
- Special Interest Groups
- Bank Clubs
- International

**Travel Trade Industry Tour Trends**

- Off-The-Beaten Path Destinations
- Immersion and Authentic Experiences
- Culinary Tours
- History & Heritage
- Health & Wellness
- Adventure Tours
- Family Travel
- Small Groups

## Travel Trade Shows

Attending group travel industry trade shows is a key element to promotion. Meeting travel buyers in a face-to-face forum is an important tool in negotiating business, building new industry relationships and cultivating existing relationships with travel buyers.

After evaluating the effectiveness of 2017 trade shows, the Group Tour Promoter will remove Group Leader exhibit based shows from the 2018 show rotation and focus specifically on Tour Operator, business appointment based Marketplaces. Meeting directly with the Tour Operator will prove the most efficient and effective way to promote The Lake George Area as group-friendly destination for their customers. Three new appointment based shows will be added to the 2018 travel schedule.

The Group Tour Promoter will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the travel trade shows the department attends by providing a detailed report within two weeks of show conclusion. Personal outreach and follow up to tour decision makers met at these shows will occur at least 2 months after the conclusion of each show and be logged into the lead tracking document.

A synopsis of the current 2018 domestic travel trade show schedule is provided. All leads obtained from shows will be shared with the 50+ Warren County businesses requesting group tour leads.

**American Bus Association Marketplace:** ABA is the travel industries premier marketplace where over 3,500 Domestic Tour Operators, Receptive Operators and Travel Suppliers convene for pre-scheduled, qualified appointments. Warren County obtains 55 (maximum) appointments as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO.) The Adirondack Regional partners attending ABA will share appointment specifics in order to acquire additional leads for follow up where appropriate.

**Heartland Travel Showcase:** 35-40 pre-selected appointments primarily with Central US based Tour Operators. For 2018, Heartland will be hosted by Buffalo, NY where a large New York State delegation of Tourism Promotion Agencies will be present. As these Operators are traveling further to reach our destination and staying longer, appointment strategy will include highlighting Adirondack Regional offerings.

**Pennsylvania Bus Association Annual Meeting and Sales Retreat:** This will be a new initiative for 2018. This meeting is devoted to education, communication of ideas, social interaction with Tour Operators on FAM Tours, networking and a sales exchange with follow up leads.

**Tour Alliance Partners TAP DANCE:** This will be a new initiative for 2018. In order to attend this unique, business appointment show, a destination must be invited by a TAP Tour Operator member. These destinations are referred to as Preferred Professional Travel Providers (PPTP's.) As this will be a new endeavor, number of pre-selected appointments obtained is TBD.

## Group Travel Trade Show Partners

The Lake George Area will partner with the Adirondack Region at American Bus Association Marketplace in January 2018. The Adirondack Region will receive sponsorship recognition with its name and logo on the appointment time clock for the duration of the 5 day marketplace. This sponsorship allows Warren County Tourism and its regional partners additional exposure with a booth on the selling floor to

network with Tour Operators. As many as 100 additional leads/conversations take place at the booth during Marketplace, offering value-add to attendance.

### **Print Collateral and Print Collateral Distribution**

The annual Group Travel Planner is the comprehensive printed piece used to promote the Lake George Area's group-friendly attractions, lodging properties and dining facilities. Each year it is redeveloped to include a new design that meets the unique needs of tour planners. The 2018 design will include a two page spread dedicated to The Original Vacation marketing campaign and several other new additions including a welcome page, enhanced listings for attractions, and three, new customizable itineraries. Unique itinerary themes include the unique Dude Ranch experiences, Maple Weekends to encourage shoulder season tours, and a Regional Itinerary (GoNorth). This 6 day itinerary is a strategic effort to prompt groups to see more and stay longer by "hub and spoking" from the Lake George Area to other destinations such as Saratoga Springs, Clinton County, Lake Placid and Tupper Lake Areas. 2,000 Group Travel Planners will be distributed throughout the year via travel trade shows and mailings to qualified leads.

### **VisitLakeGeorge.com Website**

The travel trade section of VisitLakeGeorge.com currently includes resource information highlighting group friendly assets along with suggested itineraries for Tour Operators. Improvements to the travel trade pages for 2018 will include new imagery on a welcome page with The Group Tour Promoters contact information, group services page, a request for proposal form, request for Group Travel Planner section and an email subscription page. These new website components will positively update and personalize the pages as well as provide an additional way to acquire and track incoming leads.

### **Tracking**

The Tourism Department recognizes the importance of tracking to evaluate ROI and effectiveness of its current group tour programs. In an effort to obtain reliable statistics on economic impact of Warren County's promotional efforts, a working lead spreadsheet will be utilized to document developing business. This spreadsheet will include follow up and feedback from Tour Operators throughout the year as well as information on what attractions, hotels and activities are being utilized throughout the county. This information will be shared with the Tourism Committee on a monthly basis. The Group Tour Promoter will survey Warren County group tour suppliers quarterly via Survey Monkey as to their incoming tours, number of group admissions and room nights sold.

### **Outreach and Data Collection**

A quarterly newsletter will be developed for outreach to the current database of Tour Operators and Group Leaders. This newsletter will include suggested itineraries, new tour offerings, group friendly events, incentives and additional information to keep The Lake George Area fresh in the mind of tour decision makers.

The Group Tour Promoter will conduct outreach to the Warren County Group Tour Suppliers via Survey Monkey to obtain information about their group tour marketing efforts, motorcoach statistics, feedback about travel trade shows, lead distribution program, follow up to lead efforts etc. This

information will be used to evaluate and review future marketing plans and build stronger partnerships with Warren County group tour suppliers.

### **Travel Agents**

According to USTOA research on upcoming trends for 2017/2018, 84% of members report the use of travel agents to sell travel product and that more than half (53%) of USTOA Active Member bookings in 2017 were through a travel agency. For the year ahead, 90% of members anticipate business booked through travel agents to remain the same or increase in 2018.<sup>2</sup> Warren County will leverage this trend by marketing itineraries/packages to Travel Agents across multiple platforms.

### **Print and Digital Advertising**

A print and digital advertising campaign will be created for specific markets including Tour Operators and Travel Agents whose clients are educators, students, women, bank clubs and additional special interest groups. Only placements that provide Reader Service or trackable lead statistics will be considered for 2018. Ads with media outlets that have proven to be successful will be continued. Emphasis will be placed on obtaining additional visibility in print placements by submitting regular free advertorial/editorial for consideration. Ads will also be strategically placed as part of I Love New York Inc.'s co-op advertising programs where available.

### **Familiarization Tours**

The Warren County Tourism Department has determined that experiencing a destination first-hand provides increased potential for return visits with both the leisure and group markets. At least (2) Individual FAM tours will be offered to key Tour Operators throughout the year. These individuals will be pre-qualified and selected according to their potential to bring NEW business to the area. The Group Tour Promoter will customize individual tours according to the specific need of the Operator. All services, lodging, and admissions for the Operator will be offered complimentary with the exception of some meals and travel to and from our destination.

## **INTERNATIONAL MARKETING INTRODUCTION**

Although figures released by the U.S. Department of Commerce show a drop in international visitors to the United States in the first quarter of 2017, New York City continues to be a major gateway city for inbound International Travel. Since 2010, International travel to New York City has increased direct visitor spending from 31.5 billion dollars to 43 billion dollars. NYC visitation was recorded at 12.7 million for 2016, a slight increase from 2015 at 12.3 million. The United Kingdom continues to be the top inbound market for 2016 with China moving to #2 from the 4<sup>th</sup> position in 2015. Canada, Brazil, France, Australia and Germany ranked respectively.<sup>3</sup>

A growing segment of the International market is repeat visitors to the United States who are seeking additional travel experiences throughout New York State. Emphasis will be placed on promoting regional product to this market, both Capitol-Saratoga and Adirondack, as many International Travelers may be more familiar with Upstate New York Regions and less with the individual communities within the Lake George Area. This Regional approach to promotion also reinforces the method in which the international travel vacations, supporting longer stays and visits to multiple destinations during that extended time.

Marketing efforts will focus primarily on the Foreign Independent Traveler (FIT) and the Tour Operator/Receptive Operators with whom they work directly. Delivering messaging directly to Receptive Operators based in U.S. gateway cities on the East and West Coast is the most effective way to reach Foreign Independent Travelers. Unlike American travelers, most International customers utilize Travel Agents and Tour Operators to plan their holidays.

The following strategies outline the method of realizing the goal of increasing International Travel to the Lake George Area and Adirondack Region.

### **Partnerships**

The Group Tour Promoter will continue to be a member of the I Love New York International Marketing Advisory Committee for 2018. This committee partners with I Love New York Division of Tourism offices in Germany, UK, Australia and China on programs, advertising, workshops, FAM tours and initiatives where appropriate. Committee membership enables Warren County to benefit from the highly recognized I Love New York Inc. brand.

### **ALON Marketing Group**

Warren County will continue its working relationship with ALON, a tourism marketing consultant specializing in tourism sales, marketing and business development. ALON has been instrumental in introducing Warren County Tourism Suppliers to the Travel Trade/International Market via an informational seminar held in Warren County at the end of year 2017. A second educational workshop detailing specific steps on how to work directly with this market will take place in 2018. ALON also assisted with the introduction of The GoNorth itinerary initiative at the 2017 seminar and assistance with promoting and developing that program will be ongoing for 2018.

## **GoNorth Regional Itinerary Initiative**

Warren County recognizes the importance of cultivating existing Regional partnerships in 2018 as it relates to International marketing. GoNorth is a multiple tourism agency initiative that grew its initial roots in 2017. This six day suggested itinerary was positively received by International Tour Operators during appointments at IPW 2017 and received accolades from I Love New York Inc. as a much needed promotional product for the Adirondack Region. The GoNorth program will continue to grow and improve with the following objectives for 2018:

- Develop a solid organizational structure and budget
- Determine Warren County supplier buy-in costs & benefits of participation
- Solicit additional hotel and attraction partners
- Redevelop and improve print collateral and website
- Distribute collateral to Receptive Operators interested in promoting GoNorth
- Unroll newly redeveloped product for IPW 2018

## **GoNorth Sales Mission**

The GoNorth Development Committee will facilitate and participate in a 2 day sales mission with GoNorth stakeholder/partners to promote the GoNorth Itinerary to Receptive Operator offices based in the New York City Area. Face to face presentations of the customizable, itinerary with bookable hotel and attraction product will be instrumental in increasing FIT visits to our GoNorth partner properties.

## **Website**

Develop an International page on VisitLakeGeorge.com with resource information consisting of a multi-lingual welcome page, content about accessibility for the International traveler, captivating imagery, and a downloadable link to the GoNorth Itinerary.

## **International Trade Shows**

**ALON Marketing Group Florida Sales Mission:** This will be a new initiative for 2018. Both Miami and Orlando are two major US gateway cities to incoming, International East Coast visitation and is also the home to some of the largest Receptive Tour Operators and Destination Management Companies receiving South American and European business. This sales mission has a three component approach with face-to-face sales calls to 10-12 top producing companies, a sales exchange with 40 attending Receptive Operators, DMC's and Domestic Tour Operators and a networking event with Receptives and DMC's.

**International Pow Wow:** IPW is the travel industry's premier international marketplace and the largest generator of travel to the U.S. More than 1,300 international and domestic buyers from more than 70 countries conduct business negotiations that result in the generation of more than 4.7 billion dollars in future visits to the USA.<sup>4</sup> Warren County will be joining additional NYS DMO's for the second year of its minimum three year commitment to attending this show. Those DMO's include: Buffalo, Syracuse, Oneida County, Dutchess County, Sullivan County, The Finger Lakes, and Capital-Saratoga Regions.

Warren County will take part in three days of intensive pre-scheduled appointments under the umbrella of I love New York Inc. Emphasis will be placed on promoting the Lake George Area as part of the larger Adirondack Region with the re-designed GoNorth Itinerary. Over 75 leads are obtained from appointments.

**Bien Venue Quebec:** Eastern Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal continue to be a lucrative market for incoming group tours. This show provides 30+ pre-selected appointments with qualified Canadian Tour Operators along with numerous networking opportunities.

## **Database**

Develop a comprehensive database of International market contacts for repeat outreach and messaging opportunities

1 United States Tour Operator Association

2 United State Tour Operator Association

3 NYCandCompany.org

4IPW.org