



BLACKSTONE VALLEY

TOURISM COUNCIL

2016 Marketing Initiatives

The years 2015 and 2016 will be memorable years for the Rhode Island's tourism industry and the Blackstone River Valley. While the Blackstone Valley was dealing with a reduction in funds from one major closed hotel and a reduction in room taxes, the state promotional program was being reorganized. The RI legislature then returned to a funding formula that was changed by that body in 2015. We are managing these changes and working to keep our Blackstone River Valley "ship afloat".

We believe working collaboratively with our national and state offices of tourism, our regional tourism partners in Rhode Island and in New England, our cities and towns, our local businesses, our attractions and event builders is the most efficient and effective way to develop tourism in Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley. Below are ways we focus our efforts to promote the Blackstone Valley as a premiere destination:

- Blackstone Valley brochure distribution program throughout the region and in the Lincoln and Pawtucket visitor centers
- Bi-monthly tourism industry updates
- Present Tourism learning laboratories & workshops

- Host Annual Dinner Celebration to honor and showcase local leaders and businesses
- Blackstone Valley online event calendar

Market Segment: Leisure

Objectives

- Expound upon the authenticity of the Blackstone Valley Experience
- Continue our integrated marketing campaign that attracts adult travelers and families
- Expand awareness of the Blackstone River Valley to appropriate audiences within a 3 hour radius in CT, MA and RI
- Work to create a positive image of the Blackstone River Valley communities
- Highlight the outdoor recreational opportunities, cultural and historic sites, and culinary assets of Blackstone Valley

Strategies and Tactics

- Maintain a full-time position of Marketing Director
- Maintain a part-time position of Public Relations Director
- Integrate brand identity in all marketing efforts
- Continue to partner with the State Office of Tourism on opportunities to promote Blackstone Valley

- Update TourBlackstone.com to insure that it is up to state-of-the art standards
- Maintain Visitor Center operations at our Pawtucket and Lincoln Visitor Centers
- Create innovative programs and events to draw visitors to Blackstone Valley
- Insure that all visitor attractions are supported in the activities
- Insure our Public Relations program is aggressive
- Insure that our Event Calendar is complete
- Increase leisure visitor sign-ups on our e-marketing
- Identify appropriate story Ideas that promote the Blackstone Valley
- Participate in travel writer hosting as much as possible

Market Segment: Group Tours

Objectives

- Position Blackstone Valley as a cultural, recreational, historical, natural and gaming destination
- Integrate brand identity in all marketing efforts
- Expand awareness of the Blackstone River Valley to appropriate audiences within a 3 hour radius in CT, MA and RI
- Work to create a positive image of the Blackstone River Valley communities

Strategies and Tactics

- Maintain a full-time position for Group Tour Development
- Work closely with all attractions to maximize opportunities domestically and internationally
- Attend American Bus Association Trade Show
- Attend Discover New England Trade Show
- Utilize targeted trade publications to promote Blackstone Valley as a desired group tour destination for group travelers including student and senior groups
- Integrate digital marketing and social media efforts into group tour segment when appropriate
- Promote local culinary options, such as chicken family-style and breweries, as Blackstone Valley original group tour experiences

Market Segment: International

Objectives

- Implement an integrated plan to market Blackstone Valley to the international visitor in order to incrementally increase travel. Target markets are: UK, Canada, Japan, China and Taiwan

Strategies

- Participate with Brand USA and the RI State-office of tourism on co-op programs to drive international travel to the Blackstone Valley
- Collaborate with RI's regional tourism organizations and Blackstone Valley private sector attractions where appropriate
- Continue to enhance "twinning" relationship with Amber Valley