

Annual Work Plan 2009

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is the state-designated tourism planning and development agency for the cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and the towns of Cumberland, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Smithfield, Burrillville and Glocester, Rhode Island, USA.

The Tourism Council is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1985. It produces Program-Driven-Marketing capability to the organizations and communities of the Blackstone River Valley.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council serves Rhode Island and the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor communities with resilient, sustainable, Geotourism-based, whole place tourism development programs that integrate resident needs to enhance and protect the character, environment, culture, heritage, aesthetics and businesses of the Blackstone River Valley.

General Programs and Projects

Ongoing

- Operate the Educational Vessel "Blackstone Valley Explorer" in Central Falls and Woonsocket
- Work with St. Ann's Arts and Cultural Center's Board of Directors on their initiative to develop the Center
- Operate the Samuel Slater Canal Boat as a Bed and Breakfast as well as offering tea tours and chartered river tours
- Manage the Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville
- Operate Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Fall Foliage Excursion to Putnam, Connecticut
- Operate 12 Blackstone Valley Polar Express rail excursions from Ann and Hope in Cumberland
- Coordinate the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Annual Reception, Awards Ceremony and Auction at Twin River Event Center
- Participate in the Blackstone Partnership Tourism Collaborative
- Continue to work with Smithfield on their "Plan to Plan" initiative
- Celebrate United Nations World Tourism Day in September
- Participate in the "Footsteps in History" event
- Continue to build the Blackstone Valley Tourism Network within the Valley's tourism sector
- Further develop the American Heritage River Guide Program
- Manage the Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat and Taiwan Day Festivals in conjunction with the Pawtucket Arts Festival
- Further develop the Chinese Dumpling Eating Contest in conjunction with the Taiwan Day Festival
- Assist with the production of Pawtucket's Colombian Independence Day Festival.
- Manage the Rhode Island Rivers Day celebration
- Offer paid advertising opportunities in the Visitor Centers in Lincoln and Pawtucket
- Work with colleges and universities educating students in tourism planning and development
- Promote and expand the "Travel Experiences" Trade Show

- Continue to develop additional itineraries for the Blackstone Valley Elderhostel program
- Continue to promote the Blackstone Valley Canoe and Bicycle Trail programs
- Work to reformat the financial responsibilities of Water Cruises of Rhode Island
- Support tourism development programs for all Blackstone Valley communities
- Continue to develop promotional public relations programs for Blackstone Valley communities
- Work with the Rhode Island Committee on Agricultural Promotion and Education to further the efforts of Blackstone Valley agricultural sites
- Continue to chair the Tour Rhode Island "There's No Place Like Home" event
- Collaborate with federal, state, local, non-profit and/or for-profit agencies for the benefit of tourism programs in the communities in the Blackstone Valley
- Participate in conferences and educational opportunities that benefit the mission of the Tourism Council and educate the staff to better serve the Blackstone Valley
- Continue to present at the Business Enterprises for Sustainable Tourism Educational Network Think Tank
- Continue to develop additional interpretive educational programs for the "Blackstone Valley Explorer" vessel in Central Falls, Woonsocket and Manville
- Continue to work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission with required

Non-Governmental-Organization assisted projects

- Work with City of Central Falls to complete the Central Falls Landing Project
- Work with City of Central Falls to finalize repair of the Landing Docks for full accessibility
- Continue to work with the "Fresh Beginnings" program and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and local communities in the design and construction of the Manville, Lincoln, Pawtucket, North Smithfield and Woonsocket Landings to complete the Blackstone River and Canal Navigation and Transportation System
- Continue to work with Providence Piers Company in decreasing the balance on the M/V Hope
- Continue working with the VISTA program to build the Keep the Blackstone Valley Beautiful as a "Keep America Beautiful" affiliate
- Promote "VolunTourism" programs for the Blackstone Valley
- Continue development of Eventblackstone.com web site
- Continue to work with the City of Woonsocket on their Commuter Rail study
- Work with the Preservation Society of Smithfield on the restoration of the Smithfield Bank building
- Continue working with the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative
- Further develop the Blackstone Valley Advertising Collaborative
- Further develop the Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services
- Continue "Events of the Week" program for the Blackstone Valley of Rhode Island
- Implement recommendations of the .Sbest United Nations World Tourism Organization Certification
- Work to insure that the proposed privately operated construction and debris facilities proposed for Pawtucket and Cumberland find more suitable locations for their operations
- Expand volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Continue to manage the Blackstone River State Park Visitor Services desk
- Develop the Blackstone Alert program along the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor
- Continue to support the Blackstone Valley Celtic Festival produced by Cumberland's Pendragon

- Develop more programs and a Marketing Plan for the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory
- Promote the International Restaurant Brochure in conjunction with Diningquest.com
- Enhance "Tour of the Week" program for Group Tour Operators interested in visiting the Blackstone Valley
- Work with the Providence and Worcester Railroad to encourage wheelchair accessibility aboard the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railroad tours
- Work with the Town of Cumberland to market their publication: "Cumberland by the Blackstone"
- Work, in conjunction with the State of Rhode Island and the regional tourism district managers, to promote Rhode Island as a tourism destination
- Work, in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, to promote the Blackstone Valley as a destination
- Attend the American Bus Association Trade Exchanges and other appropriate organized Group Travel Exchanges
- Work to produce an Official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide
- Enrich each of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council web sites
- Work in concert with the RI Department of Economic Development's Tourism Division in develop a Satellite Tourism Accounting System for Rhode Island
- Promote awards won by the Council such as the Ulysses Prize from the UNWTO and the Destination for Tomorrow Award from the World Travel and Tourism Council
- Promote the consultation work available through the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory
- Augment the Blackstone Valley on-line shop

New

- Develop the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame
- Create the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Festival
- Develop the Soup-Sandwich and Studio Artist Trail
- Improve the PictureBlackstone.com web site - the digital photo archive of and for the Blackstone Valley
- Seek a new method of operating the three Blackstone Valley riverboats that will be in the best financial interest of the Tourism Council and the Blackstone Valley
- Implement a Spring and Autumn Sustainable Tourism Laboratory
- Partner with Town of Cumberland and Cumberland Office of Children as an educational support partner as they develop a new educational program
- Work with the Cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket and the Town of Cumberland in seeking a manager for the Broad Street Regeneration program funded by Preserve America
- Work as one of the Resilient Partners defining and developing Resilient Tourism
- Develop a Manufacturers' Tour of the Blackstone Valley in collaboration with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
- Build up the Blackstone Valley "Carbon Footprint Campaign" for visitors, businesses and residents to make the Blackstone Valley more environmentally conscious
- Support legislation - "No Child Left Inside" sponsored by Senator Reed for Environmental Education Programming
- Work with the Town of Cumberland to develop their first Riverfront Development Plan
- Develop "Sam Patch" Day in Pawtucket
- Develop the Blackstone Valley Cultural Heritage Trail
- Develop a "How to Discover the Blackstone River Valley" tour
- Continue to research the viability of the Blackstone Valley Cajun Music Festival

- Work to create a Blackstone Valley Recreation/Environmental/Art/Cultural/ and Historic/Network
- Develop the Blackstone Alert Summit to understand the flood situations along the Blackstone River so as to mitigate future damage
- Work with MBA students to create a printed history of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Develop a long-term debt-reduction program
- Dispose of surplus property
- Pilot and develop the Dunn Foundation "View Finders Visual Pollution" Program to area school teachers
- Develop a Blackstone Valley "Eco-lab Discovery" Program and other educational programs to include the vital river ecosystem and river history
- Work with partners, such as the Rhode Island Audubon Society, to develop interpretive programs to engage and educate the general public to the historic, natural and cultural resources in the Valley and to develop new and innovative experiences aboard the "Blackstone Valley Explorer" vessel.

International

- Continue international development of tourism partnerships with England, Taiwan and China
- Participate in international promotion of the Blackstone Valley with Discover New England program, and the Official New England Information Center in Quebec
- Support the United Nations World Tourism Organization on their sustainable tourism initiatives
Front-line Visitor Service
- Continue management of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
- Continue to coordinate the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Visitor Center at the Blackstone River State Park on Interstate Rte. 295 Northbound
- Implement hospitality training to all personnel and volunteers Geotourism Planning
- Complete development plan for Central Falls Riverfront revitalization
- Update 1992 Blackstone Valley Comprehensive Regional Tourism Plan
- Continue investigating ways to develop a NGS Map Guide to highlight the natural, historic and cultural assets of the Blackstone Valley
- Promote the earned .Sbest Certification earned from the United Nations World Tourism Organization's Certification for Excellence in Destination Management

Legislative Actions

- Collaborate with Rhode Island tourism districts to maintain current or a better form of tourism district management that supports local community input in decision-making
- Using private funds contract a government affairs agent to assist in matters relating to state legislative affairs

Headquarters Operations

- Continue to upgrade office technology