

Annual Work Plan 2012

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

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

Ongoing Programs and Projects

- Operate the Educational Vessel Blackstone Valley Explorer in Central Falls
- Support St. Ann's Arts and Cultural Center's Board of Directors
- Manage the Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville
- Operate 1 Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Fall Foliage Excursion to Putnam Connecticut on the Providence and Worcester Railroad departing from Cumberland
- Operate 12 Blackstone Valley Polar Express rail excursions from Woonsocket
- Coordinate the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Annual Reception, Awards Ceremony and Auction at Twin River Event Center
- Celebrate United Nations World Tourism Day in September
- Continue to build the Blackstone Valley Tourism Network within the Valley's tourism sector
- Develop the American Heritage River Guide Program
- Manage the Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat and Taiwan Day Festival in conjunction with the Pawtucket Arts Festival
- Further develop the Chinese Dumpling Eating Contest at the Taiwan Day Festival
- Offer paid advertising opportunities in the Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center and the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center
- Work with the Bryant University, Johnson and Wales University, Brown University and the University of Rhode Island educating students in tourism planning and development
- Continue to promote the Blackstone Valley Canoe and Bicycle Trail programs
- Support tourism development programs for all Blackstone Valley communities
- Continue to develop promotional public relations programs for Blackstone Valley communities
- 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
- Develop additional interpretive educational programs for the "Blackstone Valley Explorer" vessel in Central Falls, 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

- Continue to work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and local communities in the design and construction of the Pawtucket and North Smithfield Landings to complete the Blackstone River and Canal Navigation and Transportation System
- Continue work to build the Keep the Blackstone Valley Beautiful as the Keep America Beautiful affiliate
- Coordinate community improvement events throughout Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Smithfield and Woonsocket as part of Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup
- Promote "VolunTourism" programs for the Blackstone Valley
- Continue development of Eventblackstone.com web site
- Work with the Preservation Society of Smithfield on the restoration of the Smithfield Bank building
- Continue to work with the Cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket and the Town of Cumberland in managing the Broad Street Regeneration program
- Continue working with the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative
- Further develop the Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services
- Continue "Events of the Week" program for the Blackstone Valley of Rhode Island
- Continue to implement recommendations of the .Sbest United Nations World Tourism Organization Certification
- Continue to operate the Blackstone Alert program along the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor
- Stage three programs for the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory
- 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
- 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
- Continue building the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Festival
- Continue to host the Blackstone River Conference
- Continue the ARISTA Award for Rhode Island, New England and United States agencies that excel in Sustainable Tourism efforts.
- Support the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame
- Assist in the creation of the Rhode Island Tourism Districts Inc.

New Projects and Programs

- Develop the Tour Blackstone Valley, There's No Place Like Home event

- Implement the Fresh Beginnings Report as presented to RIDOT, to complete the Blackstone River and Canal Navigation and Transportation System
- Improve the PictureBlackstone.com web site - the digital photo archive of and for the Blackstone Valley
- Seek a new method of operating the Blackstone Valley riverboats that will be in the best financial interest of the Tourism Council and the Blackstone Valley
- 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
- 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
- Work to create a printed history of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Develop a long-term debt-reduction program
- 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.
- Continue in the development of the Cherry Tree Project along Roosevelt Ave in Central Falls and Pawtucket
- Create the "Blues Train" on the Providence and Worcester Railroad
- Create the monument to Hachiko in Woonsocket
- Build the Chocolate Mill Overlook Park in Central Falls
- Work with the Japanese Government on the installation of 24 Cherry Trees in Pawtucket, Central Falls and Woonsocket

International Efforts in Promotion

- 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
- Work with the Consul General of Japan in Boston on Japan/US programs
- Work with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston on Taiwan/US programs
- Work with the RI Chinese Community on the development of China/US programs

Front-line Visitor Services

- Continue management of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
- Continue to coordinate the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Visitor Desk at the Blackstone River State Park
- Work with RIDEM to replace the vendor at the State Park Visitor Center
- Work with the City of Pawtucket to assist in financial issues relating to the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket

- Implement hospitality training to all personnel and volunteers
- Expand volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln

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
- Participate in the Woonsocket to Warwick Passenger Rail Study with the City of Woonsocket.
- Develop a Geotourism plan for Burrillville Rhode Island

Legislative Actions

- Collaborate with 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
- Search for federal and state funding to help each Blackstone Valley Town Center develop their visitor markets to sustain them through the current economic downturn

Headquarter Operations

- Continue to upgrade office technology

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