

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.

Blackstone Valley Visitor Center

175 Main Street

Pawtucket, RI, USA 02860

Work Plan 2021

February, 13, 2021

This Annual Work Plan supports the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's Strategic Plan of 2015. The work plan is a guide and points the direction of our activities to develop tourism in Blackstone Valley.

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.

The Council is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in 1985. It produces program-driven marketing for all tourism organizations and communities of the Blackstone River Valley of Rhode Island.

The Council serves Rhode Island and the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor communities with resilient, sustainable, Geo-tourism-based, whole-community tourism development programs that integrate with resident needs while enhancing and protecting the character, environment, arts, culture, heritage, recreation, aesthetics and commerce of the Blackstone River Valley.

To continue to attract visitors to the Blackstone Valley, the Tourism Council implements Place-Making techniques. To that end we operate several large-scale events, two visitor centers (both on Covid-19 hiatus) an English-built Canal Boat and a 40-passenger educational riverboat to leverage visitor spending and the Valley's attractiveness.

Progress on all projects is mitigated by time, Covid-19 and available funding

Ongoing Programs and Projects:

- Assist with the development of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park
- Continue the partnership with Mystic Aquarium educational staff on the E/V *Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Operate the *Blackstone Valley Explorer* from Central Falls Landing, Festival Pier in Pawtucket, East Providence and Woonsocket
- Work with the City of Woonsocket on a new temporary riverboat landing at Market Square

- Work to get the Samuel Slater back into Central Falls Landing with appropriate upgrades ie: Air Conditioning
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Fall excursion to Putnam CT
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Polar Express train rides from Woonsocket Station
- Present the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Annual Gathering Awards Ceremony
- Celebrate United Nations World Tourism Day
- Restart the Blackstone Valley Tourism Network
- Further develop the Hachiko Monument with the Woonsocket Rotary
- Continue Blackstone Culinaria program
- Manage the Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat and Taiwan Day Festival in conjunction with the RI Chinese community and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston and the city of Pawtucket
- Work with the Bryant University, Johnson and Wales University, Brown University and the University of Rhode Island and local high schools, educating students in tourism planning and development
- Continue working with the Paths for Progress cycling group
- Support tourism development and planning for all Blackstone Valley communities
- Continue the Chocolate Mill Overlook Park in Central Falls upkeep
- 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 the work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Inc.
- Work with City of Central Falls to complete the Central Falls Landing Project
- Continue work to build the Keep the Blackstone Valley Beautiful as the Keep America Beautiful affiliate for Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Smithfield and Woonsocket
- Continue to work with the Cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket and the Town of Cumberland in managing the Broad Street Regeneration 2.0 program
- Continue to support the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative
- Continue the Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services Program (begin no earlier than fall of 2021)

- Continue to operate the Blackstone Alert program along the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor
- Work, in conjunction with Commerce RI and the regional tourism district managers, to promote Rhode Island as a premiere visitor destination
- Work to produce an Official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide
- Enrich each of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council websites
- Continue to expand the Blackstone Valley on-line shop
- Continue researching funding to support the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Festival to life
- Continue to support the Rhode Island State Society
- Continue the planning the 50 year anniversary of Project ZAP
- Support the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame
- Continue with our Search for Santa river tour program
- Continue planting Cherry Trees along Roosevelt Ave in Central Falls and Pawtucket
- Continue with our Swamp Scare river program
- Work with the RI House - Blackstone Valley Commission on Economic Development

New Projects and Programs to consider

- Work to construct a ZAP 50 workboat for the Blackstone River
- Develop a Manufacturers' Tour of the Blackstone Valley
- 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
- Build a Rick Steves-like video for the 9 Blackstone Valley communities
- Support the Fortuitous Partners on the development of the Soccer Stadium in Pawtucket
- Work with RIDOT on the year-round Tourism Council use of One Depot Square
- Develop a "Discover the Blackstone River Valley" tour
- Build on the “Made in Blackstone Valley” campaign
- Complete the in-house the history of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.
- Implement the Canoe Training program in Central Falls on behalf of the city
 - Update Blackstone Valley Green Guide and make it available digitally.

- Represent Blackstone Valley on RI Rivers Council,
- Participate as a partner/stakeholder on the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) Blackstone River Needs Assessment Group.
- Establish a plan for the implementation of the Environmental Education programs aboard the *Blackstone Valley Explorer*, in-classroom and on-site at the River Classroom at Central Falls Landing to prepare for 2022.
- Produce fundraising video
- Revise fundraising materials

International Efforts in Promotion

- Continue international development of tourism partnerships with Canada, England, Taiwan and China
- Work with the Lt Governor on the International Economic Ambassador program
- Manage the RI Cherry Blossom Princess program
- 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
- Work with the Amber Valley of England on collaborations

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 Services at the Blackstone River State Park
- Work to secure a location for continued operations of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket

Geo-tourism Planning

- Work with all Blackstone Valley Communities and East Providence on a Geo-tourism development planning

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
- Continue to contract a government affairs manager in matters relating to state legislative affairs

Headquarter Operations

- Upgrade office technology
- Install full technology at the Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Relocate the Council headquarters to Central Falls Landing while insuring the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center operations remains in robust operations in Pawtucket

Organizational Improvements

- Update Blackstone Valley Strategic Plan