

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.  
Blackstone Valley Visitor Center  
1420 Broad Street  
Central Falls, RI, USA 02863  
Work Plan 2022

This Annual Plan supports the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's Strategic Plan of 2015.

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

The Council is a 501-c-3, non-profit organization, incorporated in 1985. It produces program-driven marketing to the tourism-related entities 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, geotourism-based, whole-community tourism development programs that integrate with resident needs while enhancing and protecting the character, environment, arts, culture, heritage, aesthetics and commerce of the Blackstone River Valley.

In our efforts to welcome visitors to the Blackstone Valley, the Tourism Council operates or manages several events, two visitor centers, four work boats, twelve dragon boats, an English-built canal boat and a 40-passenger river boat to leverage visitor spending and the Valley's attractiveness.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is a signatory to the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

**Ongoing Programs and Projects of Work**

- Assist the Blackstone River Valley's National Park development where needed
- Continue our partnership with Mystic Aquarium on the E/V *Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Operate the E/V *Blackstone Valley Explorer* from Central Falls Landing, Festival Pier in Pawtucket and East Providence
- Execute the *Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament* at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville
- Operate the *Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Fall Foliage* excursion to Putnam CT
- Operate the *Blackstone Valley Polar Express* train ride series from Woonsocket
- Celebrate *United Nations World Tourism Day*
- Continue to build the *Blackstone Valley Tourism Network*
- Further develop the *Hachiko Monument* for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hachiko's birth in 2023
- Manage the *Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat and Taiwan Day Festival* in conjunction with the RI Chinese community
- Work with our local universities and Shea High School, educating students in tourism planning and development
- Develop the Blackstone River Expeditions program
- Work with the City of Central Falls, training their youth in the skills of paddling the Blackstone River
- Support tourism development and planning for all Blackstone Valley communities

- Continue to build upon the *Chocolate Mill Park and Gateway Plan*
- 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 *E/V Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Continue to work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Inc.
- Continue the office build-out at Central Falls Landing
- Establish the River Classroom at Central Falls Landing
- Implement a 2022 Swamp Scare program
- Continue work to build the Keep the Blackstone Valley Beautiful as the Keep America Beautiful affiliate for Burrillville, Central Falls, East Providence, 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 3.0* program
- Continue working with the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative
- Expand the *Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services Program*
- Continue to implement recommendations of *.Sbest United Nations World Tourism Organization Certification*
- Continue to manage the *Blackstone Alert* program along the Blackstone River
- Maintain the *Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory*
- Work with the Genesee and Wyoming Railroad to encourage wheelchair accessibility aboard the *Blackstone Valley Scenic Railroad* tours
- Work, in conjunction with the State of Rhode Island and the regional tourism district managers, to promote Rhode Island as a premiere visitor 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
- Enrich each of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council websites
- Expand the Blackstone Valley on-line shop
- Manage the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Princess program
- Continue to support the Rhode Island State Society
- Support the Rhode Island Tourism Districts, Inc. corporation
- Continue the planting of cherry trees for the Cherry Tree Project along Roosevelt Ave in Central Falls and Pawtucket
- Expand the Group Tourism program
- Continue the support of our food and drink venues for the Blackstone Valley through active events and culinary newsletter
- Participate in the RI250 program with the Secretary of State's office
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Heritage and Environmental Trust Fund to ensure the Blackstone Valley Explorer operations into the next decade

#### **New Projects and Programs to consider**

- Host the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council open house at 1420 Broad Street
- Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation ZAP on August 27<sup>th</sup> in a valley-wide cleanup and September 10 at Slater Mill
- Produce an official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide

- Build a “Welcome to the Blackstone Valley” amenity campaign to invite overnight visitors and encourage visitors to patronize local businesses
- Build on the *PictureBlackstone.com* web site - the digital photo archive of and for the Blackstone Valley
- 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
- Develop the *Circle Blackstone* bike trail through our 10 communities
- Develop the new direct marketing campaign for events and branding campaign for the Blackstone Valley
- Develop a Blackstone Valley Cultural Heritage Trail
- Develop a "How to Discover the Blackstone River Valley" tour
- Build on the *Made in Blackstone Valley* campaign
- Continue to create a printed history of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Rebrand the Blackstone River Valley’s ten communities
- Bring Destination Development Association to work in East Providence
- Integrate East Providence into all aspects of the Tourism Council’s work program

#### **International Efforts in Promotion of Blackstone Valley**

- Continue international development of tourism partnerships with Canada, England, Taiwan and China
- Participate in international promotion of the Blackstone Valley at the Discover New England Summit when it is held
- Work with *BrandUSA* on the international tourism promotion opportunities
- 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
- Work to secure funding for the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
- Work to maintain our office in Woonsocket
- Continue to coordinate the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Visitor Services at the Blackstone River State Park.
- Work with VIP program to build volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln

#### **Geotourism Planning**

- Work with all Blackstone Valley Communities and East Providence on a geotourism 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 agent to assist in matters relating to state legislative issues and questions.
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a Southern New England Congressional Tourism Caucus

**Headquarter Operations**

- Install full technology at the Visitor Center in Lincoln

**Organizational Development**

- Keep current the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Strategic Plan
- Implement a succession program