

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.

1420 Broad Street

Central Falls, Rhode Island USA 02863

Annual Work Plan

June 2023

This Annual Work Plan supports the current Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's Strategic Plan.

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 Tourism Council works hand-in-hand with CommerceRI and its Tourism Division experts to build sustainable tourism in Rhode Island.

The Council is a not-for-profit organization, incorporated in 1985. It produces program-driven tourism development to the 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, 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 multi-cultural events, two visitor centers, several 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.

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
- 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
- Present the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council open house at 1420 Broad Street
- Celebrate *United Nations World Tourism Day*
- Continue to build the *Blackstone Valley Tourism Network*

- Further develop the *Hachiko Monument* for its 100th anniversary 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, educating students in tourism planning and development
- Develop the Blackstone River Expeditions program
 - Work with the City of Central Falls in training their youth in the skills of paddling the Blackstone River
 - Work to develop the Blackstone River Canoe and Kayak rental program
 - Work to establish a handicapped canoe and kayak launch at Central Falls Landing
- Support tourism development and planning for all 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 *E/V Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Continue to work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Inc.
 - Continue to establish the River Classroom at Central Falls Landing
- 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 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 Providence and Worcester 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
- Produce an Official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide
- 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 in the planting of Cherry Tree Project along Roosevelt Ave in Central Falls and Pawtucket
- Expand the Group Tourism program

New Projects and Programs to consider

- 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
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Heritage and Environmental Trust Fund to insure the Blackstone Valley Explorer operations into the next decade
- 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
 - Consider the building of a full-scale canal boat for the 200th anniversary of the Blackstone Canal

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 with Discover New England program
- 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
- Continue to coordinate the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Visitor Services at the Blackstone River State Park
- Expand volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Work to secure 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 agent to assist in matters relating to state legislative affairs
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a Southern New England Congressional Tourism Caucus

Organizational Improvements

- Keep current the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Strategic Plan