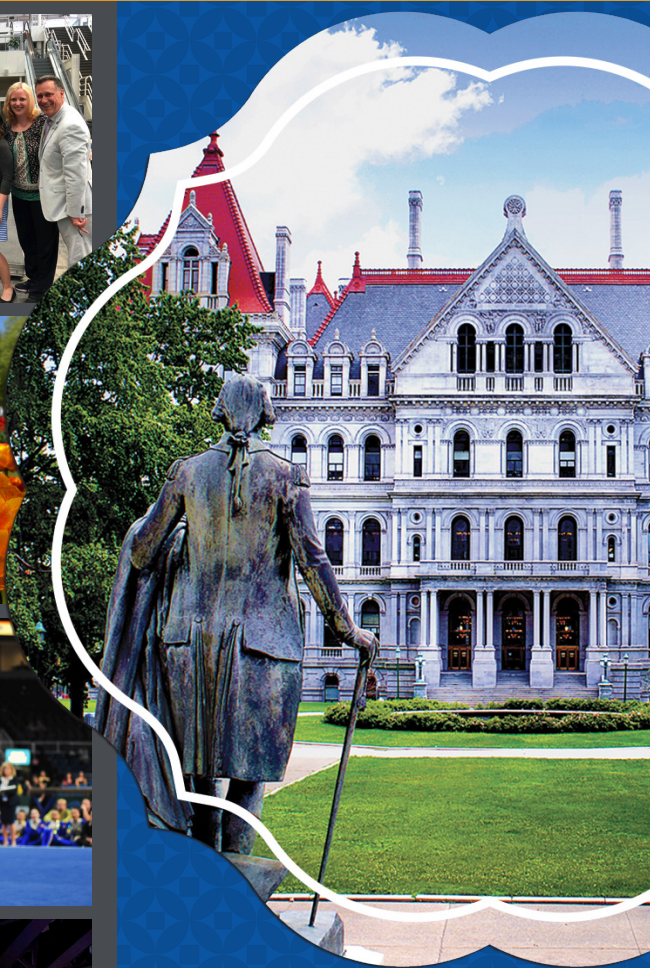


DISCOVER ALBANY

Beyond Conventional



Photo - Joe Fazio



2019
Annual Report

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Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Leola Edelin, Chair

General Manager, Renaissance Albany

Doug McClaine, Vice Chair

General Manager, Albany Capital Center

Robin Jackson-Lambertsen, Treasurer

Controller, Albany Marriott

Michael Gulotty, Immediate Past Chair

President of Operations, Vista Host

Mark Bardack

President, Ed Lewi Associates

Sonya del Peral, Esq.

Owner, Nine Pin Ciderworks, Partner, Bowers and del Peral, PLLC

Jill Delaney

President/CEO, Secretary, Discover Albany

Directors

Carm Basile

Capital District Transportation Authority

Mark Benson

University at Albany

Nick Boulas

Hilton Garden Inn-Albany Med

Matthew Cannon

Albany County Executive Office

Melissa Carrier

Total Events

Tyler Desmond

Desmond Hotel & Conference Center

Mohammed Hemmid

Hampton Inn & Suites

Michael Hoffman

Turf Hotels

Jeff Mirel

Rosenblum Companies

Kim Partridge

Empire State Plaza Convention Center/OGS

Tim Vennard

Mazzone Hospitality, LLC

Ex-Officio

Daniel McCoy

Albany County Executive

Anthony Capece

Central Avenue Business Improvement District

Mark Eagan

Capital Region Chamber of Commerce

Paula Mahan

Colonie Town Supervisor

Joseph LaCivita

Colonie Economic Development

Hon. Kathy Sheehan

Mayor - City of Albany

Georgette Steffens

Downtown Business Improvement District

Sarah Reginelli

Capitalize Albany Corporation

Letter from the Chairman



Dear Colleagues,

As Board Chairperson for Discover Albany, I am delighted to see the growth and ongoing transformation of our destination. Our team continues to look ahead to the ever-changing landscape of conventions and tourism and is poised for growth.

Looking back at this past year, it is safe to say that our region enjoyed many benefits of the promotional work being done here in Albany County. We welcomed business leaders from across the region to a Hospitality Summit with our eye on growth for the County and the region as a whole. In recognizing the vast opportunities we have before us to collaborate, this was a great step in connecting the assets of our region to position our future as a must-visit destination.

As we look toward 2020, Discover Albany's Board of Directors will be working closely with the staff and leadership to continue with our momentum of 2019. Our financial stability and physical presence within the County will be key to our growth and continued increases in occupancy and visitor spending.

I challenge each and every one of you to be more engaged with Discover Albany. Together we can maximize all that our wonderful region has to offer. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve and I look forward to another successful year with my fellow board members.

Leola Edlin

*General Manager, Renaissance Albany Hotel
Chairperson, Discover Albany Board of Directors*

Letter from the President



Dear Friends and Partners,

I have once again enjoyed the privilege of working with our Discover Albany team, Board of Directors and many wonderful partners in 2019. The results you will find in this report demonstrate the successes we shared which have brought about increases in visitor spending and satisfaction.

We shared some of the many historically and culturally significant programs that our Cultural Heritage and Tourism partners collaborated on. Not the least of which were the Hamilton in Albany program, as well as the surprisingly popular Herman Melville's Moby Dick Book Club, celebrating the roots of these historic figures here in Albany.

In 2019, we enjoyed quite a few celebrity sightings thanks to both the Albany County Film Commission, a division of Discover Albany, and our Sports Commission. We welcomed athletes from around the world for the inaugural Aurora Games, including Nancy Kerrigan and Nadia Comaneci. And for Film Albany's Regional Film Day, our audience was surprised with an award presentation by actor Ben Stiller.

The art landscape of Albany County goes way beyond our strong film industry - in 2019 we could barely keep up with the changing landscape of the arts thanks in part to the amazing murals that appeared throughout the destination as part of the Capital Walls Mural project. This project, along with Art on the Rail Trail, and our many galleries and museums, have spawned programming and collaboration that will continue into 2020.

I am very excited about the future of Discover Albany and look forward working with all of you in 2020 to show the world why Albany is Beyond Conventional!


Jill Delaney
President/CEO, Discover Albany

Hospitality Excellence Award

PROFESSOR ANTHONY STRIANESE HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE AWARD

"The Toby"

Albany's Hospitality Industry is an essential component of the Capital Region's economic vitality. The Professor Anthony J. Strianese Hospitality Excellence Award is the only honor developed solely to recognize excellence in travel and tourism and represents the best of Albany's hospitality culture. There are hospitality professionals around the world who were positively influenced by Professor Strianese and his 40-year career in hospitality naming the award for Toby is a great honor to his memory.

2020 Recipient:

DUTCH APPLE CRUISES & TOURS



"Dutch Apple Cruises & Tours is honored to receive the Professor Anthony J. Strianese Hospitality Excellence Award. Our team's mission, and passion, is to host tourists from the world over and enlighten them with all that the Capital Region has to offer. We are truly grateful and humbled to be recognized for these efforts and want to thank Discover Albany, and the entire hospitality community, for their continued partnership."

Melissa Hagan Renna & Anthony Renna of Dutch Apple Cruises & Tours

Hospitality Grants

HOSPITALITY GRANTS

Discover Albany announces \$57,400 in funding for the latest round of Michele L. Vennard Hospitality Grant Program recipients with a presentation ceremony during the 2020 Annual Meeting at The Desmond.

The grant fund, which is managed by the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region (CFGCR), supports programs that aid in building and sustaining Albany County tourism destinations, attractions, events, and tourism-related activities. The grants encourage collaboration between nonprofit organizations, community groups, and hospitality businesses to further extend the economic impact of tourism and business.

Over the course of the past five years, the Michele L. Vennard Hospitality Grant Program has awarded \$360,900 to organizations that create programs and tourist-attracting events in our community.

2019 Grant Recipients

Albany Barn, Inc.

Albany Center Galleries, Inc.

Albany County Historical Association, Inc.

Albany Institute Of History & Art

Albany Symphony Orchestra, Inc.

Capital Repertory Company, Inc.

Erie Canalway Heritage Fund, Inc.

Friends Of Pruyn House

Historic Albany Foundation, Inc.

Historic Cherry Hill

Irish American Heritage Museum

Lake George Opera Festival Association, Inc.

Musicians Of Ma'alwyck, Inc.

Old Songs, Inc.

Palace Performing Arts Center, Inc.

Park Playhouse, Inc.

Pine Hollow Arboretum

Sage Colleges - Opalka Gallery

Steamer No. 10 Theatre, Inc.

University At Albany Foundation
On Behalf Of The New York State
Writers Institute

Albany Ambassadors

Discover Albany is proud to announce the addition of 10 Albany Ambassadors in 2019. Albany Ambassadors are local volunteer meeting planners who have embraced the bureau's "Host it Here" slogan and were instrumental in bringing meeting, convention and event business "home" to Albany. Once again, our corps of Ambassadors represent a wide-ranging variety of events, which brought 8,738 delegates, filling more than 2,643 hotel room nights with estimated direct spending of \$1.23 million.

Glenn Sullivan

Northeast Aquatic Plant Management Society (NEAPMS)

Stacy Williams

New York Association School Psychologists (NYASP)

Karen Bonitatibus

New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA)

John Keegan

New York District Circle K International (NYCKI)

Teresa Kennedy & Lea Darling

American Volkssport Association

Donna Schick

National Federation of Democratic Women

Maura McSweeney

New York State Board Ancient Order of Hibernians

Lamont Taylor

Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regt. Reunion Association

Mary Miller

New York State Reading Association (NYSRA)

Robert Barnhart

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Department of New York

Strategic Initiatives

Discover Albany continues to use Strategic Initiatives as our guide to success. Progress is reported to the Board six times per year and staff continually keep the initiatives “top of mind” in their work. What follows is a synopsis of key programs and developments that have transpired throughout the year.

Initiative One:

ENHANCE THE AWARENESS, APPRECIATION AND SUPPORT OF DISCOVER ALBANY AND ALBANY'S VISITOR ECONOMY

DEVELOP A COMPELLING MESSAGE

- » Developed a new tagline for Discover Albany “Beyond Conventional”.
- » Attended the New York Times Travel Show and Dream Destinations to keep Albany top of mind for travelers and to meet with journalists and pitch Albany for media coverage.
- » Hosted 14 journalist FAM Tours, introducing travel writers to Albany and local businesses to help with media stories.
- » Responded to 14,914 consumer requests for visitors guides. Distributed an additional 44,675 visitors guides in and out of market.
- » Worked with Brand USA to create a digital campaign targeting Canada resulting in: 6.6 million impressions, 1,194 clicks, 694 booked hotel nights and \$82,827 in booked hotel revenue.
- » Served as the social media entity for the duration of the Aurora Games.
- » Developed “Hamilton in Albany” programming including the Historic Albany Foundation guided Hamilton tour, based on Discover Albany brochure with approximately 30 people per tour.

Strategic Initiatives

DEVELOP ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY MEASURES TO QUANTIFY IMPACT

- » Continued email marketing campaigns aimed at Consumers, Meeting Planners, and Group Tour Operators. We sent 367K emails to 31,000 recipients, with average open rate of 22.25%.

ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS

- » Discover Albany recruited 22 new partners in 2019.
- » Partnered with CDTA to establish Historic Downtown Trolley Tours, which took place July 19, August 16 and September 20 and had 55 attendees.
- » Created the Moby Dick Book Club in collaboration between the Writer's Institute and the Historic Albany Foundation with approximately 30 people per session.
- » Worked with other community organizations on Aurora Games programming and delivery.
- » Hosted a "Day of Discovery," including a social media workshop for our Cultural Heritage partners and a visitors guide launch and mural pop-up party in collaboration with Advance Media and Albany Center Gallery to introduce our #ArtfulAlbany theme for 2020 with over 40 guests.
- » Hosted a speed networking event for partners at Skyloft with over 25 attendees.
- » The City of Albany welcomed a delegation of high school students from Nijmegen in October, a program of Friendship Albany Nijmegen. Collaborating with Discover Albany the City of Albany was able to create an immersive itinerary that combined visits to popular tourist attractions, meetings with local officials, and experiences with American high school students. Highlights included a hike at Thacher Park, a ghost tour of Ten Broeck Mansion, a Planetarium show at the Henry Hudson Planetarium, a tour of the Martin Van Buren House and a tour of the Iroquois Indian Museum.
- » The Services department has undertaken a food recovery initiative to reduce food waste and the overall carbon footprint of meetings and conventions in our

Strategic Initiatives

destination. This program has become another service our destination offers that sets us apart from similar destinations. The relationship Discover Albany has with its partners is a critical component of this program's ultimate success.

- » Hosted 2 FAM tours with 9 targeted clients. Tours included 20+ partners in showcasing the destination as a first-class meeting destination and a first-class tourist destination. This resulted in 3 leads, one confirmed booking and numerous referrals for our partners.

USE MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE DISCOVER ALBANY VISIBILITY

- » To secure media coverage for the destination, Discover Albany prepared 54 media releases, and did 22 media interviews. We also hosted 14 journalists, who we brought to 56 businesses and attractions. Because of these successful efforts, we were able to secure 101 articles, valued at an estimated \$84,296, and a readership of 50.5M people.
- » Invested in print and digital advertising campaigns in 5 monthly trade magazines (Meetings Today, Smart Meetings, Small Market Meetings, Meetings & Conventions, and Successful Meetings) and 5 national consumer publications (including Food Traveler, Roadrunner, and AARP Magazine).
- » Launched Geofencing campaign, targeting Connect Meeting goers at three of their meetings.
- » Completed 2 Facebook Live Series: Hamilton in Albany and Holidays, which featured 10 partners and reached 52K people.
- » Worked with Brand USA to develop and Enhanced City page for visitors with destination information, attractions and events. Content will be translated in over 15 different languages.
- » Utilized social media influencers to reach a new audience including "The Yellownote" who completed a summer and fall campaign, which resulted in 128K impressions, reached 104K people, and received 10.5K engagements.

Strategic Initiatives

Initiative Two:

LEAD THE DESTINATION IN NEW VISITATION
AND THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF THE ALBANY
CAPITAL CENTER

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO OUTLINE
DESTINATION GOALS

- » Albany continues to develop sales initiatives that focus our efforts in markets where we can see immediate and consistent growth. The Focus on regional associations has evolved our Tradeshow and FAM Tour process.
 - **Destinations Northeast** appointment-based tradeshow, 20 appointments, 1 immediate lead
 - **Meeting Professionals International New England Chapter Education Institute**, a networking event that produced 3 immediate leads, 2 resulting in bookings
 - **Connect DC** an appointment-based tradeshow, 13 appointments 3 immediate leads, 2 resulting in bookings
 - **Small Market Meetings** an appointment-tradeshow, 25 appointments, 2 immediate leads
- This regional approach has been producing results that are sustainable by engaging clients that are seeking meetings in the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic regions that are rotational, initial opportunities result in repeat bid opportunities. New England Regional Genealogical Consortium (NERGC) and the Northeast Cider Conference are a few examples of the types of regional clients we have made inroads with this strategy.
- » In addition to a regional sales effort, the Discover Albany Sales Team has also developed sales tools to take advantage of local vertical markets that have opportunities to increase business. These efforts are tradeshow based and tool based.
 - **Connect Medical/Technical**, an appointment-based tradeshow is a new show we have put into

Strategic Initiatives

our regular schedule. Substantive appointments were improved with the Marketing department's development of a Technical/Medical Infographic highlight the region's attractions for this specific type of meeting.

- **Sports Events Tourism Association**, an appointment-based tradeshow, 29 appointments 1 immediate lead, 1 booking with a repeat Baseball Client.
- » Participated in a strategic planning session with Visit Providence and our shared partners at ASM Global.

INCREASE NEW VISITATION TO ALBANY COUNTY

- » Film Albany continues to be a driver for Hotel Guest room stays and for visitor spending and overall economic impact. The Film Albany Web pages received 2,400+ hits for the year and Debby Goedeke, as film commissioner, has responded to 220+ direct inquiries regarding opportunities to film in Albany County.
- » Film Albany has cultivated a reputation with Netflix, HBO and the independent film makers in our region as a critical resource for locating productions in our region. The Development and Launch of the Regional Film Day hosted in May of 2019 attracted 120 attendees, and galvanized Albany as the leader in the regional film community. This unqualified success of the Regional Film Day has spawned creative collaborations and the planning for the 2nd Annual event in May 2020.
- » The Destination continues to provide Convention Services offering such services as Volunteers, Information Kiosks and welcome posters.
- » The Service Department has also maintained or created 25+ microsites for Conferences and Events that are seeking ways to connect attendees with Discover Albany's partners. Successful microsites for the NYS Bar Exam and HV Gamer Con, both attracting over 4K hits.

2019 By the Numbers

Sales Activity Report

TOTAL 2019 LEADS: 170

TOTAL 2019 LEAD ATTENDANCE: 50,264

TOTAL 2019 ROOM NIGHTS: 105,305

BOOKINGS

TOTAL 2019 BOOKINGS: 66

YTD ATTENDANCE: 62,358

YTD ROOM NIGHTS: 59,286

Operations Metrics

VISITORS CENTER

ATTENDANCE:

10,886 including
3,950 students

GIFT SHOP NET INCOME:

\$3,786

PROGRAM NET INCOME:

\$12,950

	January	Feb	March	April	May	June
2018	586	607	860	808	1,714	1,146
2019	557	512	587	845	1,459	1,478
	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	1620	866	773	1348	582	432
2019	1473	931	731	1490	534	289
					2018 Totals	11,342
					2019 Total	10,886

AIRPORT INFORMATION CENTER GUESTS SERVED: 81,000

Marketing Metrics

WEBSITE:

UNIQUE VISITORS: 472,076

TOTAL PAGE VIEWS: 1,126,448

WEBSITE TRAFFIC

ORGANIC: 291,079

OTHER: 195,256

TOP TRAFFIC SOURCES:

ORGANIC SEARCH: 291,079

DIRECT: 102,690

REFERRAL: 18,049

SOCIAL: 18,049

PAID: 42,093

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Discover Albany maintains robust presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. In 2019, we delivered 4.5 M impressions across platforms with 167.5K engagements. We gained 5,841 followers, a 21.1% increase from 2018. We also generated 167.5K engagements, up 29.9% from 2018, showing that our destination is attracting more interest.

Financial Report

2019 Financial Report

CONDENSED BALANCE SHEET (AS OF 12/31/19, UNAUDITED)

Assets

Cash & Receivables	\$1,642,632
Receivables	\$64,601
Property & Equipment	\$69,388
Other	\$393,510
TOTAL	\$2,170,132

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$80,295
Other	\$72,858
TOTAL	\$153,153

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$2,170,132**

2020 BUDGET

INCOME	2020 BUDGET	2019 BUDGET (UNAUDITED)
Earned Income	116,000	102,753
Fees for Services	1,693,678	1,629,278
Grants	142,240	144,440
Investment	26,000	90,475
Other	1,250	472
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,979,168	\$1,967,418

EXPENSES	2020 BUDGET	2019 BUDGET (UNAUDITED)
Admin Expenses	434,126	372,645
Marketing	363,875	386,821
Other	40,900	147,083
Personnel	1,140,267	1,005,894
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,979,168	\$1,912,445

Mission Statement

Discover Albany strengthens the awareness of Albany County as a convention and visitor destination, attracting individuals, families, and businesses from around the world to increase revenue and stimulate economic development and growth for the community.



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