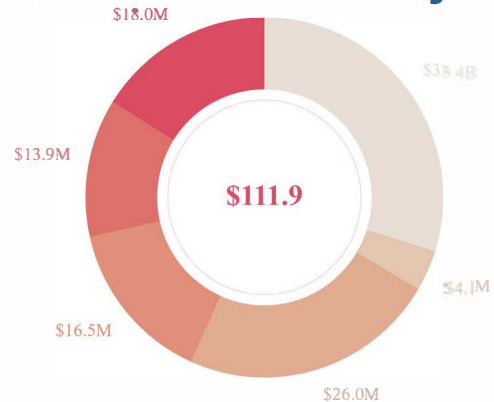


Visitors to Cayuga County spend **\$111.9** million annually on

Lodging	\$33.4 million
Recreation	\$4.1 million
Food & Beverage	\$26.0 million
Retail & Service Stations	\$16.5 million
Transportation	\$13.9 million
Second Homes	\$18.0 million



Tourism is responsible for the employment of

**1,621**

people in Cayuga County

Tourism generates

**\$13.3 MILLION**

in state and local taxes in Cayuga County

Tourism provides

**\$428**

in tax relief per Cayuga County household

\*These numbers reflect 2019 activity. The full economic impact of 2020's COVID related closures will not be reflected until Summer 2021 when the next report is released.

## Refocusing in 2020

In March 2020, when the implications of the pandemic started appearing our office took a moment to reflect and pivot to provide the services and information most needed for our partners at each phase. At this time, no one could possibly imagine the incredible impact it would have on the tourism industry and all the tourism partners.

**Mitigation Stage** - During our crisis management we did what was required to stay afloat, redefining our mission during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Refocus Stage** - During this time we took our time crafting the proper, critical messaging. We highlighted the amazing product available in Cayuga County to the residents of Cayuga County. The aim of this refocus was to increase engagement and support that was crucial for the partners survival.

**Local Restart** - The proper messaging continued to be critical. The tone of encouraging visitation from our neighboring counties, while balancing the needs and fears our residents.

**Regional Restart** - Still potentially a faraway reality, this is when we will return to our pre-COVID-19 priorities. 2021 will continue to be a year of local and regional promotion. Tourists will start traveling once the vaccine is widely available, but they will travel primarily nationally.

## Public Relations

We refocused our PR outreach to local audiences. We participated in the Finger Lakes Regional and I Love NY public relations programs, supplemented with our in-house efforts including:

- Social Media
- Promotional opportunities
- Editorial calendar monitoring
- Media Lead tip sheets
- Media Pitches
- Press Releases

Our public relations efforts generated 131 editorial placements online and in print publications, radio, and television. Significant media placements included USA Today Special Edition, Forbes, Lonely Planet, Travel Weekly, Reader's Digest, and Travel & Leisure magazine as well as many other niche media outlets.

## Group Sales

Group travel was one of the hardest hit industries. We have maintained communication and outreach to our group travel contacts. We don't predict a resurgence of group travel in 2021, but it will be the time to restructure our group tour offers and start new programming. We attended the TAP Showcase virtual showcase in 2020.

The **2020** Finger Lakes Regional PR program secured over **225 media placements** that resulted in more than **1.967 billion** media impressions.

## Digital Marketing

- 67,257 unique visits to  
Tourcayuga.com
- Monthly promotional e-blasts
- Tourcayuga.com blogs
- Twitter & Pinterest
- Facebook & Instagram \*including  
paid promotions
- Online Visitors Guide

# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

In 2015 the Cayuga County Office of Tourism conducted Travel Market Research to address the very unique aspects of Cayuga County as a tourism destination to identify by market segment those attractions & amenities which drive tourism & generate both overnight and repeat visitation. In 2020 the office was committed to concluding the key objectives of our 5 year strategic plan. Now in 2021 we have crafted the 2021-2025 Strategic plan.

- Focus the future message and imagery around the following unique assets:
  - Live entertainment - wide variety throughout the year
  - Auburn - a vibrant and thriving creative community
  - Iconic Americans - Harriet Tubman & Frances Seward
  - Aurora - a scenic location with upscale lodging and dining
  - Fair Haven - the next great harbor destination
- Use our updated brand to create a consistent, cohesive branded message for Cayuga County.
- Continue to drive year round visitation with focus on shoulder & off season promotions
  - Brave Women FLX
  - Hibernation
- Ongoing support of the PR efforts of the Finger Lakes Region and New York State to capture the attention of travel writers and bloggers.
- Share research data with community leaders as a catalyst for future development.
- Maintain the boomer market while growing the millennial, Gen-X and Gen-Y markets.

# COUNTY PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

## NEW INITIATIVES IN 2020

### #GIVINGTUESDAY

#### 5 day messaging plan

This 7 day #GivingTuesday messaging plan is designed to streamline efforts and inspire your audience to both join and share your campaign. In the 2-3 weeks leading up to #GivingTuesday, start sending messages to ensure your audience is aware of your participation and the stories of your organization's work, but hold off on the full-out efforts until a few days before.

Information was gathered from Mobile Cause. You can visit their website, download the full planner or email: [stuart@mobilecause.com](mailto:stuart@mobilecause.com)

#### ANNOUNCE

5 Days before.

- Send an email containing your logo, mission, theme, goals and links on how to give
- Message your board, ambassadors and volunteers the plan

#### PROMOTE

4 Days before.

- Post on social media
- Share your hashtags and #GivingTuesday
- If you're planning a live (virtual) event make sure to push that now.

#### SHARE IMPACT

3 Days before.

- Use storytelling to tug at donor's heartstrings
- Send an email showing your 2020 challenges for your organization and those you serve.
- Highlight a beneficiary's story or a volunteer's connection on social media

#### REMIND

2 Days before.

- Ask supporters to give testimonials about your (past or present) work
- Ask supporters to post you a link (without their name)

#### APPEAL

1 Day before.

- Morning: send email with a preliminary ask and how to support
- Afternoon: Post on social media with appeals, stories, #s and how to donate info

#### INSPIRE

Today is the day!

- Make a whole day plan with postcard emails including your mission, goals, impact stories, event reminder, and how people can donate.

#### THANK

the day after.

1. Thank your community's leading donors
2. Acknowledge donors who received a tax deduction for #GivingTuesday
3. Thank everyone who gave and shared
4. Thank all the people who helped

TOURCAYUGA!  
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Education: Pro Tip Series** launched a new educational series for our business partners. The series was developed to bring timely marketing ideas for the constantly changing 2020 environment.

### Digital Efforts:

**#TravelConfidently** was in tandem with the US Travel Association making it a national campaign and effort showing the ways that you can travel safely.

**Our Cayuga** was an effort focusing on the faces behind the places, a push to make connections with neighbors.

**Unplan a Getaway** was a digital campaign geared towards the millennial group who was comfortable traveling in the summer and fall. We used bright colors to convey fun and confidence with a strong focus on what you can experience safely.



**Tourism Summit** was a virtual presentation with CEDA on the **State of Tourism** in 2020.

**Videos: Reimagining Tourism, Shop Small, Shop Local & Shop Safe** were all examples of video series published to social media and YouTube highlighting the efforts of Cayuga County partners to adjust and thrive in the era of COVID-19.

### INQUIRIES

817 inquiries from ads placed in print, television, the internet & social media as well as emails collected at consumer travel shows. The largest trackable generators being Haunted History Trail, NYSTIA, AARP and the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council website.

### PUBLICATIONS

- Cayuga County Visitors Guide
- Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway
- "Did you know?" Trivia booklets
- FREE Cayuga County & Historic Auburn maps
- Route 90 50-mile Garage Sale brochure
- "On the Water" guide & map
- Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail
- For the Birds guide
- South Street Auburn Historic Walking Tour
- "Odd, Quirky and Offbeat" Heritage Trail brochure
- Lure Show Guide

# REGIONAL & MULTI-COUNTY PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

- Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council
- Lake Ontario Sportfishing Promotion Council (LOSPC)
- Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway
- Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance
- Canal New York
- Haunted History Trail of New York State

## EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

### ADVOCACY

We recognize the need to build long-term public support of the tourism industry in Cayuga County through recognition of the impact it has on the local economy. In regards to economic development especially.

- 2019 Annual Report on tourism distributed to community leaders.
- Quarterly e-newsletters to tourism partners.
- Placed two local economic impact ads in The Citizen.
- Three articles in The Auburn Citizen newspaper.
- Monthly interviews on WAUB radio
- A strong video campaign aided by partnership with BID, CEDA and the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce.

### EDUCATION

The CCCVB assesses the training needs for tourism organizations and businesses in Cayuga County and provides workshops, programs, and special tools to address those needs. The COVID-19 Pandemic didn't allow for our traditional workshops and FAM tours, we adapted to the time and programs possible:

- Pro Tip Series - infographics and email assistance to improve the positioning and marketing efforts of our partners
- Leadership Cayuga sponsorship
- Annual meeting & tourism awards
- E-learning portal offering that encourages cross promotion and high quality service to increase repeat visitation.

### RESEARCH

- We continue to purchase a "comparative counties" monthly report from Smith Travel research, which provides us with hotel occupancy and room rate data. These reports are valuable market tracking tools & help us to gauge the impact of our promotional efforts.
- Tourism Economics, an Oxford Economics Company provides an Economic Impact of Tourism in New York annual report.
- In 2019 we conducted the Tourism Sentiment Index (TSI). The TSI is a measure of our ability to generate positive word of mouth about tourism. For 2020 our study identified 75% of online tourism conversation as neutral, 22% as promoter (positive) and only 3% as detractor (negative). This combined gave us an overall score of 19.

### MISSION

The Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) is Cayuga County's tourism promotion agency. We increase tourism and related revenues through promotion and research-based targeted marketing, and we improve the visitor experience by providing data and training to local hospitality industry providers. We continuously work to increase tourism and improve the visitor experience, which in turn stimulate economic growth and sustain recreational and cultural opportunities in the county.

### VISION STATEMENT

The CCCVB will be the primary catalyst for the ongoing development of a dynamic, collaborative and innovative Cayuga County tourism industry which:

- Enhances economic development throughout the county
- Improves quality of life for its residents
- Provides an unparalleled Finger Lakes visitor experience

### STAFF

**Karen Kuhl** Executive Director  
**Gillian Sears** Administrative & Project Coordinator  
**Claire Dunlap** Marketing Manager

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Andrea Seamans** Chair  
**Stephen Lynch** Vice-Chair  
**Linda Eldred** Secretary  
**Susan Dove** Treasurer

### BOARD MEMEBRS

**Tracy Verrier**  
Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce

**Jennifer Haines**  
City of Auburn

**Doug Dello Stritto**  
County Parks

**Stephanie DeVito**  
Auburn BID

**Jeffrey Ludwig**  
Seward House Museum

**Charles Mason**  
City of Auburn

**Sallee Ten Eyck**  
Summerhill Brewing

**Ken Warner**  
Colloca Estate Winery

**Kirsten Wise Gosch**  
Cayuga Museum

**Amanda Hennessey**  
Hilton Garden Inn

**Erin Katzker**  
The REV Theatre

**Susan Lemon**  
Hardware Cafe & General Store

**Cheryl Longyear**  
Montezuma Historical Society

**Meryl Eriksen**  
Inns of Aurora