

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021
South County Tourism Council



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Tourism Partner,

I think we can all agree 2020 was quite a year. First, I hope this finds you well.

Although the pandemic made travel difficult, if not impossible, in some ways, people still needed to get out of the house, off the zoom calls and out into nature and we were pleased to see so many visitors find their way to South County, Rhode Island in such challenging times.

A key factor to our success during the pandemic was that we did not go dark. We continued our marketing efforts by focusing on our drive market. We encouraged locals to "love where you live" and take a staycation in South County while inspiring out-of-state visitors to "find their way back" to South County, RI. We created new videos that aired on WGBH public television in Boston, as well as on our website. Billboards went up on different highways in our drive market, digital ads were placed nationally as well as print ads in such publications as Conde Nast Traveler, Yankee, Boston Spirit Magazine and more.

We continued our social media efforts growing our audience. We started a new podcast, the Wavelength, where we sit down with a South County business or local expert and chat about their work. We opened an online shop where we can sell iconic, South County merchandise.

We expanded our community relations by donating gift baskets to our chambers to auction off. We purchased the items in the baskets to boost our local businesses such as hotels, restaurants and attractions and let the chambers auction them. We ran a Golden Ticket Getaway contest to boost the local economy where we sold locally made candy bars that included winning tickets. Sales of the bars were donated to the Chorus of Westerly Summer Pops and the prizes that included two-night stays in South County with restaurant gift cards and activity vouchers. The response was immense.

We continued our public relations efforts both in-house and in conjunction with the state's PR firm and we were able to earn some major press around the region. We continued to host travel writers, though not at our usual level due to the pandemic.

All in all, we had a better year than we expected and we hope to see many visitors return in the coming year.

Louise D. Bishop



President, South County Tourism Council

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ABOUT THE COMPANY

The South County Tourism Council is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the towns of Charlestown, Coventry, East Greenwich, Exeter, Hopkinton, Narragansett, North Kingstown, Richmond, South Kingstown, West Greenwich, and Westerly as a leisure travel destination. The SCTC's promotional efforts include publication of a 100-page vacation guide; a year-long advertising campaign directed at our leisure tourism market; targeted sales efforts; public relations strategy; participation in numerous trade shows; and a comprehensive website. The SCTC is available to assist travel professionals including media, tour operators, and travel agents, aid in planning a meeting or corporate event, and provide information to help visitors enjoy the destination.

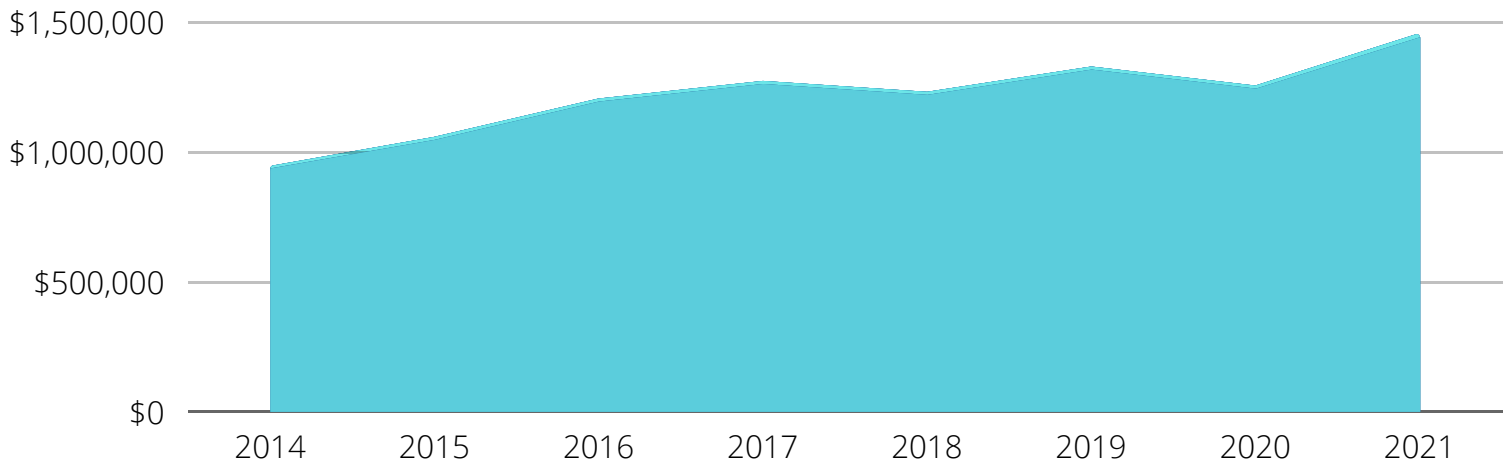
MISSION AND VISION

The primary mission of the South County Tourism Council is to plan, promote and market tourism beyond our eleven town region. Working within the applicable state policies and procedures, board membership has the opportunity to identify our target tourism market, and develop marketing campaigns that attract visitors to our area.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

South County Region Growth By Hotel Tax Revenue



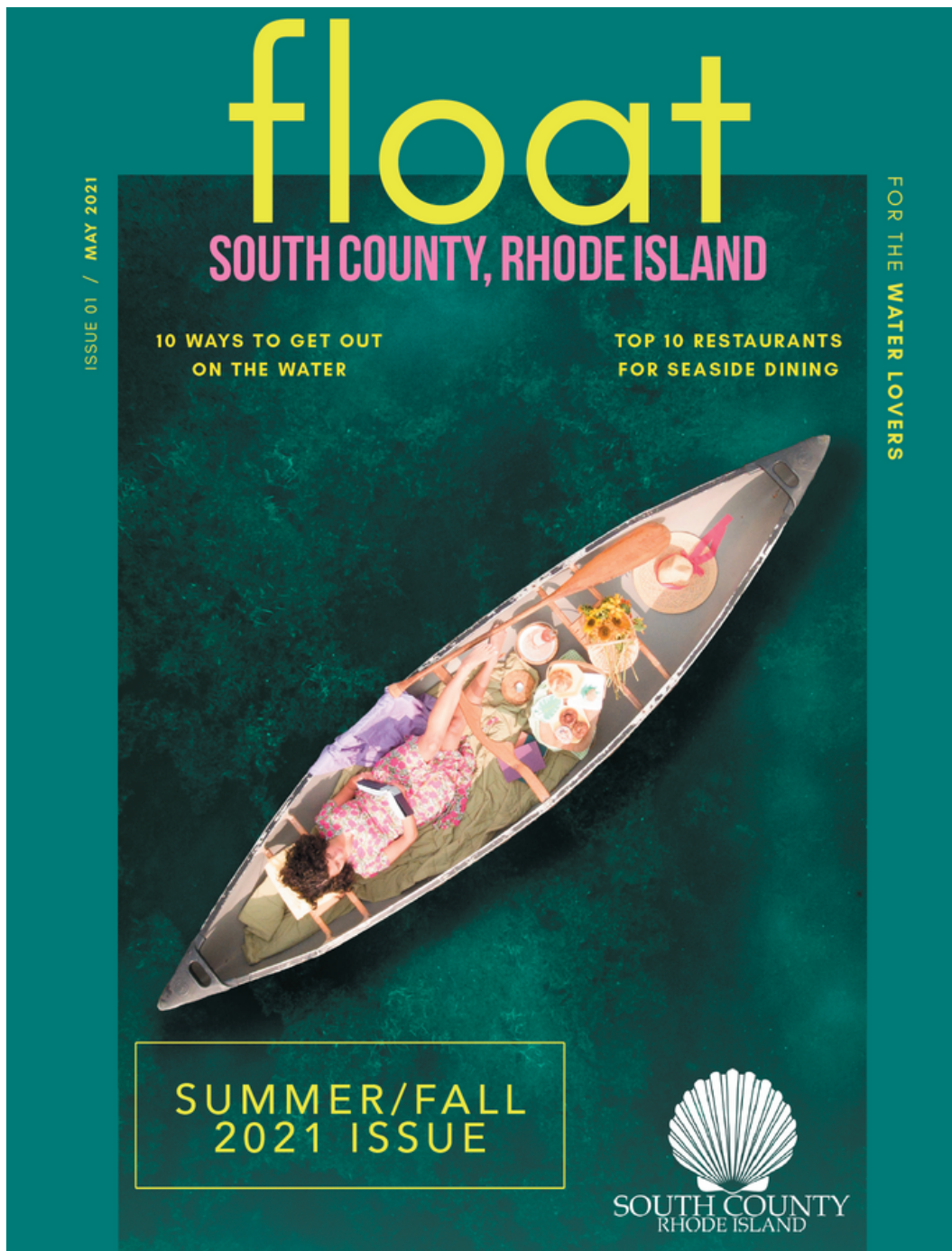
YEARS ENDING JUNE 30,	2017	(1)	2018	(1)	2019	(1)	2020	(1)	2021	(1)
Revenues										
Room Tax	\$ 1,263,740		\$ 1,221,762	(2)	\$ 1,319,210		\$ 1,245,706		\$ 1,443,975	
Other	\$ 74,055		\$ 97,389		\$ 86,595		\$ 83,568		\$ 38,853	
Interest	\$ 8,968		\$ 7,739		\$ 5,583		\$ 8,715		\$ 5,104	
Total	\$ 1,346,763		\$ 1,326,890		\$ 1,411,388		\$ 1,337,989		\$ 1,487,932	
% Change	4.9		(1.5)		6.4		(5.2)		11.2	
Expenses	\$ 1,611,021		\$ 1,500,696		\$ 1,372,243		\$ 1,347,340		\$ 1,066,421	
Revenues Over (Under) Expenses	\$ (264,258)		\$ (173,806)		\$ 39,145		\$ (9,351)		\$ 421,511	
Beginning Net Assets	\$ 2,201,280		\$ 1,937,023		\$ 1,763,217		\$ 1,802,362		\$ 1,793,011	
Ending Net Assets	\$ 1,937,022		\$ 1,763,217		\$ 1,802,362		\$ 1,793,011		\$ 2,214,522	
(1) Audited by Mullen, Scorpio & Cerrilli, CPA										
(2) The Room Tax distributed to the region was reduced by 5%										



FLOAT DIGITAL VISITOR GUIDE

We didn't print a new guide for 2021, instead we designed (all in-house) a new, abbreviated digital guide called FLOAT that can be updated seasonally. Click on the image to get to the link.

We continued to distribute hard copies of the 2020 guide and our maps upon request to individuals, chambers, and any places or organizations that requested them.



SOUTHCOUNTYRI.COM

When we compare our July 2020 – June 2021 website statistics to July 2019 – June 2020 we see a steady increase across the board.

Pageviews are up 30%, number of users is up 35%, number of NEW users is up 34%, number of sessions is up 28% and bounce rate is down 14%.

GOAL
Getter





Digital Campaigns

Our Google AdWords campaign for the last fiscal year yielded 545K impressions +60% over last year and 13K clicks +63% over last year with a 2.3% CTR (average CTR for a Google AdWords campaign is 1.9%).

MediaMax (Conde Nast) yielded 8.8M impressions with a 1% CTR (benchmark .05-.18%) and for social there was a 1% CTR (benchmark .19-.24%).

LocalIQ yielded 4.4M digital display impressions with 0.13% CTR (benchmark is .05%), 5M social impressions with a 0.60% CTR (benchmark 0.19-0.24%), and 1.5M YouTube impressions with a 13% Video View Rate (benchmark 9%).

WGBH yielded 600K impressions and 1.2K clicks for a 2% CTR.





South County, Rhode Island
SouthCountyRI.com



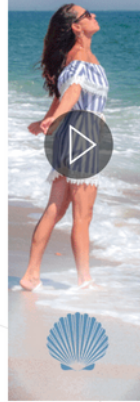
▶ *Yes, please!*



This summer, you should be at the beach


SOUTH COUNTY
RHODE ISLAND
SOUTHCOUNTYRI.COM

Plan Your
ESCAPE



SouthCountyRI.com 

Sample Digital Ads



▶ *Don't say goodbye to summer yet!*



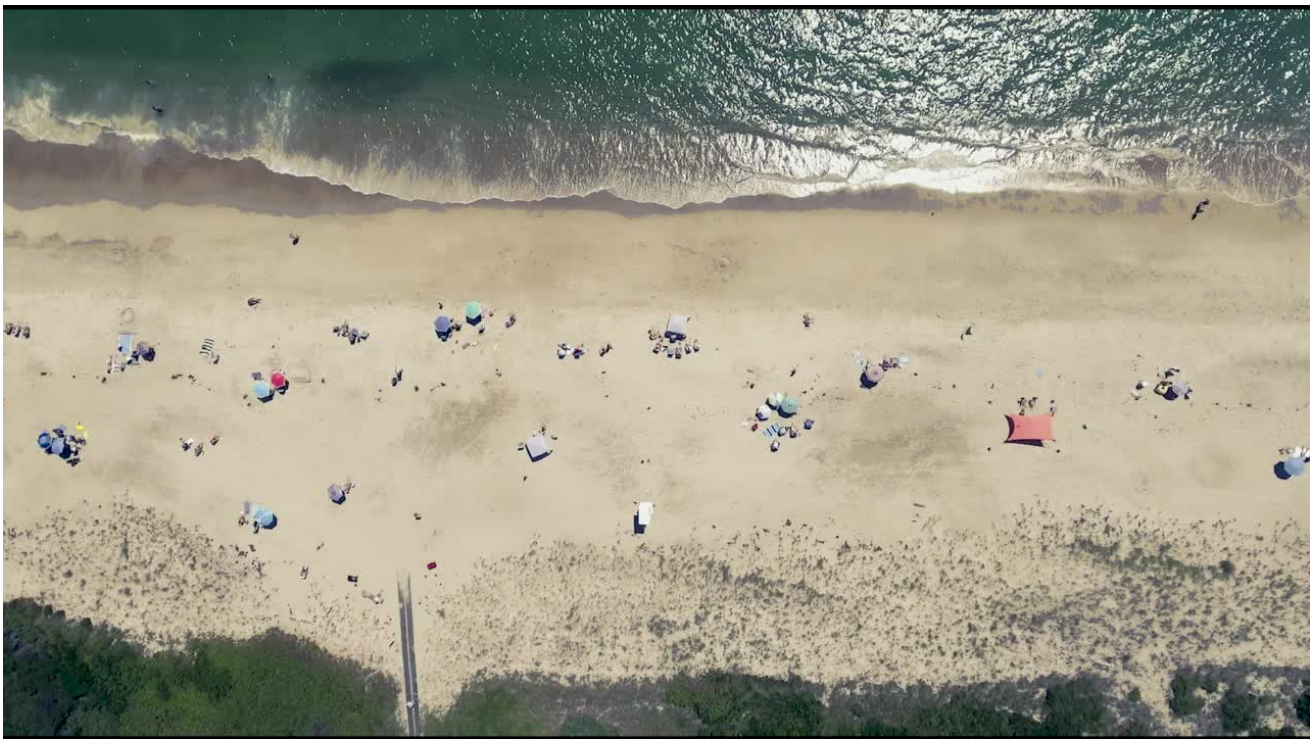
We advertised on Billboards in our drive market from Springfield, MA through CT, NJ and down to MD and DC via LAMAR for a total of 9.2M impressions.



Out of Home Advertising




Beach Please



Our new video focused on getting out of the house and out to the beach. Focusing on all the ways South County offers plenty of space to get outside in nature and escape the confines of quarantine. We aired this shorter version on WGBH and had the full length video running on our website, social channels and YouTube and Vimeo. We also included it in our digital display advertising.

[Click to play.](#)



NOW OPEN

We launched our online shop in late June which is full of South County branded products. Our sales didn't start until July so we'll report on how the shop is doing next time. So far, the tote bag and the South County hoodie are the top sellers.





The Wavelength podcast is an educational and entertaining interview series about South County RI. Every other week we sit down with a local business or expert that calls South County home and chat about their work, their relationship to South County, and how they make our area special and unique.

Episodes: 22

Listens: 1,270

Followers: 27

854 page views on the landing page on
our website, 680 unique visits

Referrals:

www.southcountyri.com 68

facebook.com 37

[Instagram.com](https://instagram.com) 32



Our e-newsletters go out weekly to an average list of 4,390 subscribers. In March through September, we had a 20% open rate and a 22% CTR. Industry average for open rate = 13% and for CTR = 5%.

Our top clicked links were as follows:

1.Covid 19 Updates

2.ReopeningRI.com

3.South County Restaurants offering Delivery, Takeout and Curbside Pickup

4.Cut Your Own Lavender Event at Lavender Waves Farm

5.3 Rhode Island Road Trips article in Boston Globe



FaceBook

From July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 our cumulative FaceBook followers were 100,800 (up by 400 since last fiscal year)

Our average reach is 992K with a 3% CTR (average is 0.9%) and a 10% engagement rate (average is 3.2%).

Our top performing post was about outdoor dining snow globes at Coast Guard House that garnered 6,011 reactions and 3.4% engagement rate!





Our cumulative Twitter followers count is 6,125.

Our impressions are 282K with a 2.3% CTR (average is 1.6%) and an engagement rate of 1% (average is between 0.2% and 0.9%).

Our top performing post was a link to a travel article about South County which earned 23,839 impressions and a 0.2% engagement rate!





From July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 our cumulative Instagram followers count was 12,404 with 3,724 new since last fiscal year – a 43% growth.

Our average monthly impressions are 168K with a CTR 5% (average is 0.5%) and an engagement rate of 6% (average is 3%).

Our top performing post was a photo of the Towers linked to a Yankee Magazine article about coastal drives.. The post had a reach of 36K, 1,545 likes, 20 comments, 87 shares, 69 saves and an engagement rate of 12%!



Instagram



Our blog had 16,367 visits from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, with a CTR rate of 60% (average is 1.9%). We had a 17% increase in blog traffic over the previous year! Google Analytics also shows that readers' time on our blog went up by 42%!

Our top blog posts for last fiscal year were:

- [The Crab Days of Summer](#)
- [Star Struck in Southern Rhode Island](#)
- [Secret South County Sculpture Trail](#)
- [Ocean House Unveils New Experiences for Spring & Summer](#)
- [10 Unique Wedding Ideas in South County, RI](#)





Last year we extended our PR and marketing efforts to building community relations. Through several events we were able to raise the visibility of South County Tourism Council while supporting our community and giving back. A Golden Ticket Giveaway was a fundraiser for the Chorus of Westerly Summer Pops by selling chocolate bars made by Hauser Chocolatier and three Golden Ticket winners won a two-night stay in South County, while 30 Silver Ticket winners won gift cards to local restaurants.

We donated gift baskets for a two-night stay in South County and gift cards to restaurants and activities to each of our chambers to help them raise money.

And lastly, we supported the Ocean Community Chamber by hosting a photo booth for their holiday light-up drive through event. Families were able to take their holiday photos in our decorated booth by a professional photographer.



Community Relations

Public Relations



We had 2.76K total media placements from July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, some of the top ones include:

- For Endless Sky, Sea And Sand, Book This Relaxed But Luxe Rhode Island Resort (Forbes)
- Rhode Island Travel Guide (Travel+Leisure)
- Why You Should Consider Rhode Island for Your Next Beach Getaway (HGTV)
- Charmed, I'm Sure (Travel+Leisure)
- Got a day with no plans? Try visiting Wickford, R.I., in the winter (Boston Globe)

Total reach: 300M

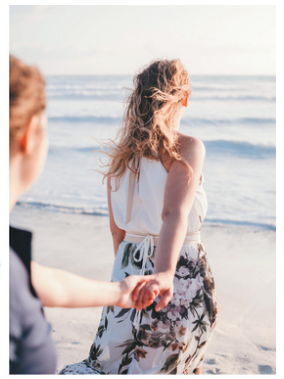
AVE (Advertising Value Equivalent) = \$3M





South County

Rhode Island



Summer lingers longer in South County, Rhode Island. The beaches are less crowded, the water is still warm and the seafood is always fresh. Spend some time on one of our 20 public beaches, plan a picnic, catch some waves and watch the sunset. Paddle along peaceful inlets to secluded sand bars and watch migrating birds. Soon you'll understand why Rhode Island is called "the ocean state". And you'll agree with us that September is the best time to visit. Plan your trip now at SouthCountyRI.com.



SouthCountyRI.com



We placed print ads in national and regional publications such as \Conde Nast Traveler, Bon Appetit, North Shore Magazine, Yankee Magazine and Boston Spirit (above).

PRINT

ADS



More Print Ads



Closer
than you think.



South County, Rhode Island

Visit SouthCountyRI.com for more information.



Lobster rolls at the beach?
Yes, please.



South County, Rhode Island

20 beautiful public beaches, fresh local seafood, and many secret, peaceful spots to picnic, hike or just connect with nature.
Visit SouthCountyRI.com for more information.



You Should Be at the Beach



South County, Rhode Island

20 peaceful public beaches. Just a 2 hour drive from the MA North Shore but feels like a world away.

Visit SouthCountyRI.com for more information.



Go ahead, breathe.



South County, Rhode Island

20 peaceful public beaches just a 2 hour drive from the MA North Shore but feels like a world away.

Visit SouthCountyRI.com for more information.



Visit South County, Rhode Island

Sometimes you have to get a little lost to find yourself. In South County, Rhode Island nature offers many opportunities to get lost. Miles of hiking and biking trails through lush forests and nature preserves spill into 100 miles of coastline. Unwind on any of our 20 public beaches or paddle through peaceful inlet waterways. Dine on locally caught, fresh seafood, explore local arts and culture and dive into the history of the region. Find your way back to South County, Rhode Island and book your stay today.



Don't say goodbye to summer just yet.

Summer lingers into October in South County, Rhode Island. Beaches are less crowded, the water is still warm, and the seafood is always fresh. Visit us this fall and find out why September and October might be the best time to come. Learn more at SouthCountyRI.com.



AD CO-OPS

We paid for ad placements for key partners to help with their advertising efforts that would also help the region by attracting visitors.



NATURAL BEAUTY AND A RICH HERITAGE have drawn families to these coastal New England resorts for more than a century. Unforgettable experiences are infused with lasting traditions, unfaltering attention to detail and uncompromised personal service. Pampered pleasures include private beaches with cabana service, the Five-Star OH! Spa, croquet and culinary classes, farm-to-table dining, a resident naturalist and an array of complimentary daily resort activities.

Enjoy Five-Star service with the OH Well program for health and safety.

Ocean House, Weekapaug Inn and Watch Hill Inn are all located in South County, Rhode Island. For more information on this scenic destination visit SouthCountyRI.com.



Reserve now for your treasured getaway. Visit our websites or please call 866.753.9044.



YOUR OWN PRIVATE OUTDOOR GETAWAY

NESTLED AMID THE NATURAL BEAUTY of 3,500 acres in South County, Rhode Island lies the most amenity rich, four-season private sporting club on the East Coast.

Preserve Sporting Club & Residences offers activities for guests of all ages, all with the service you've come to expect from Ocean House Collection of New England resorts.

Guests enjoy a combination of unspoiled nature and refined luxury with more than 20 amenities including golf, tennis, swimming, sporting clays, and access to Ocean House's private beach just down the road.

Other memorable experiences include private dining at the Maker's Mark Hobbit House and luxury accommodations the Hilltop Lodge, featuring the new OH! Spa. The Preserve seamlessly infuses outdoor adventure, wellness and New England hospitality into every experience.



888.469.1913 PRESERVESPORTINGCLUB.COM

LEISURE STAYS | MEETINGS & EVENTS | MEMBERSHIPS | RESIDENCES

HOTEL WEEK

We worked with the state to bring Hotel Week 2021 to South County. It was moved to April because of the pandemic, and we had several properties participating, including Ocean House, Weekapaug Inn and Shelter Harbor Inn - all with affordable rates.

Hotel Week earned a good amount of press that translated into stays thanks to our partnership with the state's PR company, NJF.





We were honored to win the Bronze in the North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA) awards in the destination video category for our Find Your Way Back video in 2020.

We also received an honorable mention in the destination visitor guide category for our 2020 Visitor Guide.

