

Cherry Hill



Ten Broeck Mansion



Horatio Goring 2nd



Schuyler Mansion



Pinksterfest

Cultural Heritage and Tourism

Partnership Results Report



Alice Morgan Wright



Henry Johnson



1st Steam passenger train in America



DISCOVER ALBANY





On the front cover:

The cover art was taken from the Albany Capital Center murals, created by Dahl Taylor. The murals at the Albany Capital Center highlight Albany's history and culture. The project was complemented by an interactive website that provides details on the 50 points of interest depicted in the murals. The content for the website was provided by representatives of the heritage community, in coordination with Discover Albany. Each participating partner provided a short description of their site and website link for more information. The goal of the mural project was to pay homage to this city's historic character, and to inspire visitors to visit and experience the area's many important sites.

The Heritage Tourist

According to a 2013 tourism research report, an average U.S. cultural heritage traveler as compared to U.S. leisure travelers:
 Spend more: \$1,319 vs. \$820 per trip
 Stay longer: 4.7 nights vs. 3.4 night
 Travel more often: 3 or more trips annually

Since 2016, Discover Albany has been working in concert with heritage sites to conduct visitor surveys to learn more about our typical visitor. In 2018, we discovered the following:

85% visited for pleasure in 2018

52% learned about Albany from advertising, social media, and websites.

3 nights majority of visitors stayed in hotels

Age:

- 18% - 19-35
- 20% - 36-50
- 40% - 51 and over

CHAT Partnership Advisory Board:

- Alay Medina**, Cultural Affairs Director, City of Albany
- Maeve McEneny**, Heritage Tourism Program Coordinator, Discover Albany
- Bob Belber**, Times Union Center
- Jill Delaney**, Discover Albany
- Mark Eagan**, Capital Region Chamber
- Leola Edelin**, The Renaissance Hotel
- Tammis Groft**, Albany Institute of History & Art
- Heather Groll**, NYS Office of General Service
- Pam Howard**, Historic Albany Foundation
- Jessica Neidl**, NYS Museum
- Cordell Reaves**, NYS Historic Preservation Office
- Sarah Reginelli**, Capitalize Albany Corporation
- Mark Schaming**, NYS Museum
- Miriam Trementozzi**, Former Co-chair, Albany Heritage Tourism Advisory Council

Heritage Tourism: A Major Opportunity

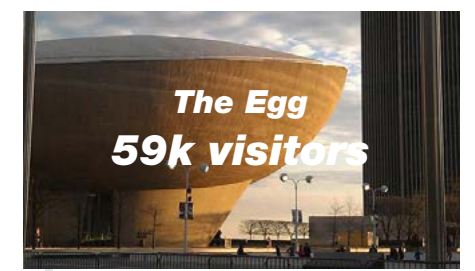
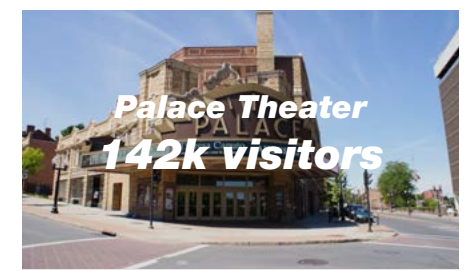
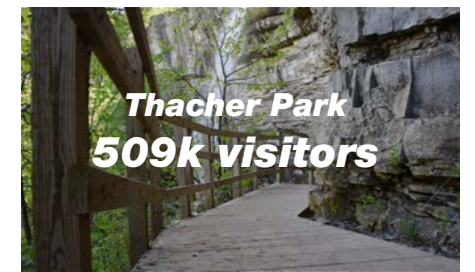
In 2016, the City of Albany, working in partnership with the Albany Heritage Tourism Advisory Council and Discover Albany, developed a vision and strategic plan for heritage tourism. The Albany Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2018 reinforced the city's foundational goal of being recognized as a "top international cultural heritage tourism destination." To do that, the Mayor convened a Cultural Heritage and Tourism Partnership, comprised of motivated stakeholders from a variety of institutional and community sectors to meet and carry out the goals and strategies outlined in the plan. The group was led by an advisory board, coordinated by Maeve McEneny.

Since 2016, the group has made significant progress in meeting the goals of the plan. With collaboration and input from the heritage tourism community, the CHAT team was able to identify priorities, create and curate "immersive visitor experiences" and market those experiences to the world. The group worked collectively to develop themes, shared best practices for attendance building, and created new partnership opportunities within the heritage community. They measured their accomplishments with marketing metrics, regularly administered visitor surveys, and reported monthly visitor attendance. Discover Albany reported to the city on their progress on a quarterly basis.

This report outlines some of the most exciting results of this group's work. Discover Albany has collected case studies to illustrate some of the different ways we worked together to **share Albany's distinctive, authentic cultural heritage with visitors**. We also provide details on some of our efforts to enhance visitor readiness, most especially the Visitor A2D program. During this same period, Discover Albany worked with the City of Albany and Capitalize Albany Corporation to **add new heritage tourism products to Albany**. Finally, the group works together to increase visibility and market Albany's cultural heritage assets to **increase visitation**.

Albany County's Top 5 Visitor Sites:

Attendance reports collected and compiled by Discover Albany in 2017.



Goal 1: Promote and Expand

Promote and expand Albany's existing cultural heritage experiences

Strategy 1.1:
Share Albany's distinctive, authentic culture through innovative and engaging visitor experiences

**Case Study 1:
Hamilton
in Albany** Based on popularity of Broadway musical Hamilton, several heritage partners teamed up to create a day-long Hamilton themed experience in Albany. In 2016, Discover Albany worked with heritage partners on timing, logistics, tours, and created our own Hamilton-themed walking tour of downtown Albany.

Participating partners:

Albany Institute, Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site, Crisan Café, and First Church.

Logistics:

We assembled presence on albanys.org site, created a brochure, and launched marketing campaign. We pitched to national media, hosted journalists, and helped secure media coverage.

Results:

As a result of this team effort, participating partners reported a spike in visitation. The campaign won a MARCOM Award from the American Marketing Association of the New York Capital Region. We distributed 3,000 brochures, 1,391 were downloaded at www.albanys.org. We distributed media kits to 71 target media contacts, produced 16 tweets, 346 likes, and 68 retweets. Our print and digital advertising reached key markets such as New York, Boston, and New Jersey. Attendance to the Schuyler Mansion from June to September 2016 increased by 118%, while the Albany Institute of History & Art increased 53% during the same period. Perhaps one of the most exciting developments was WMHT's decision to create "Hamilton's Albany," a documentary which focused on the same sites we outlined.

Testimonial:

"Your 'Hamilton in Albany' tour has helped us immensely and was a primary resource when we applied for funding to host a local preview screening of the PBS Hamilton documentary. We've since compiled information from other sources - at the Schuyler Mansion, the AIHA, First Church, etc., but the tour/brochure gave an easy-to-digest, succinct account of Hamilton history as it relates to Albany. I'm honestly not sure I would have had enough time to do my own research without this as a jumping off point."

- Danielle Sanzone, WMHT

How the CHAT Partners Tell Albany's Stories:

STEP ONE:

Talk to our heritage stakeholders. We meet with partners to share information, identify themes, and cross-promote programs.

STEP TWO:

Curate. We work with partners to identify themes, and then create and curate programs and events around those themes. Gather all relevant information together on focused Albany.org website pages so we can share with visitors. These "immersive visitor experiences" offer different lenses through which to tell Albany's unique American story.

STEP THREE:

Market those "immersive visitor experiences" using a range of different vehicles -from paid advertising to media outreach to the creation of print collateral.

STEP FOUR:

Measure results. Survey our partners and discuss results of campaigns. How did the programs go? Did they drive more traffic to their sites? What can we do better or differently next time.

Case Study 2: Erie Canal Bicentennial

Working with the heritage tourism group, and based on the strength of existing programming, we decided on the Erie Canal Bicentennial as a theme for 2017.

Participating Partners:

New York State Museum, Albany Institute of History & Art, Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, Dutch Apple Cruises, Irish American Heritage Museum, Shaker Heritage Society, Waterford Historical Museum and Cultural Center, and dozens of other sites created more than 50 special and recurring events focused on the canal, as well as ongoing exhibits and displays about its history.

Results:

As a result of this team effort, we were able to put Albany on the map for Erie Canal tourists. We had 9,267 pageviews of our Erie Canal page and digital content. Our media outreach resulted in stories in *Group Tour Magazine*, *Hudson Valley Magazine*, *New York Makers*, *Capital Region Living Magazine*, and *WGY Radio*.

Testimonial:

"We are so grateful for Discover Albany's role in shining the spotlight on the Erie Canal Bicentennial. Their promotion helped people experience the waterway's many treasures, including exciting events, recreational trails and tours, historic sites, waterside parks, locks and engineering marvels, and charming canal communities. Best of all, our partnership will have lasting impacts as we continue to collaborate on initiatives that connect people with the Capital Region's historic waterways."

- Jean Mackay, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Case Study 3: Tastes & Traditions

In 2018, bolstered by the success of previous efforts, we mounted our most ambitious visitor experience. We worked with heritage sites to create and support experiences and programs related to everyone's favorite topic - food. It turns out, each site has a food story to tell!

Participating partners:

Over 80 sites and businesses participated, creating 117 events and programs.

Logistics:

With input from partners, Discover Albany curated events, tours, classes, and exhibits on our albanys.org website. We devoted a page to Tastes and Traditions in our Albany Visitor Guide, launched an advertising campaign, and mounted an outreach campaign to secure media coverage.

Results:

As a result of this innovative new programming, we were able to appeal to food and heritage tourists. We had 6,403 pageviews of our "Tastes and Traditions" page and digital content. Our media outreach resulted in stories in *Hudson Valley Magazine*, *All Over Albany*, *Spectrum News*, *News10*, *New Jersey Star-Ledger*, *Times Union*,

Troy Record, *Great Vacation Getaways*, *Successful Meetings*, *Small Market Meetings*, *WEQX*, and *WGY*. Numerous sites said the campaign proved effective for them, and attendance for related programs was above average.

Testimonial:

"Albany County Historical Association was pleased to learn that one of Discover Albany's themes for 2018, "Tastes and Traditions," dove-tailed nicely with ACHA's year-long series of programs, 'Appetite for History.' In addition to our own marketing, Discover Albany helped us reach new audiences and supported our efforts. ACHA is happy to be a member of Discover Albany and thankful for their support!"

- Samantha Hall-Saladino, Executive Director,
Albany County Historical Society

Other notable themes

World War I

To celebrate the centennial of World War I, Discover Albany gathered events, tours, exhibits from 10 participating partners on the Albany.org site, and marketed them to audiences through paid advertising and social media.



Albany's Sister City, Nijmegen

To honor the historic relationship between Albany and Nijmegen, our sister city in the Netherlands, the City of Albany hosted two Dutch delegations in 2017 and 2018. Visitors from Stitching FAN - Friends Albany-Nijmegen were treated to a tour of Albany, film screening, a lecture, and honored at a ceremony at Albany City Hall. Albany sent humanitarian supplies to Nijmegen to help citizens at the close of World War II. To thank Albany, the Dutch sent tulip bulbs which were planted in Washington Park in 1948, the same year the city celebrated the first Tulip Festival.

Haunted History

Discover Albany worked with heritage sites to capitalize on an angle that was proving very successful nationally: ghost stories. Discover Albany gathered and promoted assets on the Albany.org site and paid for sites to participate in the popular "Haunted History Trail of New York State." Discover Albany hosted several FAM tours to secure media coverage.

Dutch History

To celebrate Albany's history as a Dutch colony, Discover Albany gathered special events related to the region's Dutch History and collected them on the Discover Albany.org site. We also worked with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation on a site focused on Dutch history, and helped create the "Going Dutch" walking tour.



The Legacy of Henry Johnson

To help commemorate the contributions of Henry Johnson, an Albany resident who posthumously received the National Medal of Honor for his bravery in World War I, the City of Albany created Henry Johnson Day in 2017. The city also awarded the Henry Johnson Award for Distinguished Community Service in 2017 and 2018. In 2018, Ferris Coin, working in conjunction with CHAT, minted 500 silver coin-shaped medals to honor Johnson. The coin premiered at the Palace Theatre in a special ceremony. Ferris coin is one of the nation's oldest coin shops.

Women's Suffrage

To recognize the centennial of women's suffrage, Discover Albany gathered special events, tours, and exhibits related to the passage of women's right to vote on the Albany.org site. We marketed them to audiences through paid advertising and social media.

Visitor Journey A2D

In 2016, Discover Albany hired the nationally recognized Visitor Engagement Academy to create Albany Visitor Journey A2D, a training program designed to create more positive visitor experiences for Albany tourists. Staffed by Discover Albany, the program uses online and in-classroom instruction customized for our destination to create more positive visitor experiences. To date, we've graduated 170 Albany Visitor Champions, who work in Albany's hotels, historic sites, and tourist attractions. Albany Visitor Champions also enjoy special perks, including discounts at participating sites and businesses, a monthly newsletter and special free events that allow them to enjoy the best of Albany.



This year, Albany Visitor Champions were treated to a night at the Albany Symphony, as well as tours of Ten Broeck Mansion, Capitol Hill, and the New York State Education Building.

Strategy 1.2:
Enhance the "visitor readiness" and quality of existing and emerging cultural heritage assets.

With the completion of the Albany Capital Center in 2017 and the successful remodel of the Times Union Center in 2018, Albany positioned itself as a prime destination for meetings and events. To build upon those successes, Discover Albany worked with CHAT partners to identify gaps in service, and help to prepare Albany for the influx of visitors.

Attendance Tracking

Since 1988, Discover Albany has worked with attractions and sites across the county to collect and compile attendance figures. By keeping track of visitor counts year-over-year, Discover Albany is able to recognize trends, track the impact of marketing campaigns, and identify priorities. The results are shared with CHAT partners on an annual basis.

Visitor Surveys

Beginning in 2016, Discover Albany began surveying visitors to heritage sites using a brief customer survey. In the spring, blank surveys are provided to each participating site for distribution to visitors. Completed surveys are collected and compiled at the end of each summer. Surveys provide more information about Albany's heritage tourists, including demographics, length of stay, and destination feedback. This information is used to make decisions about advertising and program development.

Since 2016, Discover Albany and CHAT partners have worked together to create new tourism products which highlight Albany's unique stories. These tourism products are tying existing sites and businesses together in new ways, and creating even more for visitors to enjoy in Albany.

Strategy 1.3:
Add new high quality cultural heritage tourism products and services available to visitors.

Historic Neighborhood Brewery Tours

To help highlight Albany's craft beverage history, Discover Albany worked with Ale historian and author of *Upper Hudson Valley Beer*, Craig Gravina to design and promote a series of tours that focused on Albany's distinctive brewing history. Each tour focused on a different neighborhood of Albany, and highlighted local businesses within that neighborhood. The tours were promoted on the Albany.org website, and advertised on WEQX and *All Over Albany*.



Ale Historian Craig Gravina leads Historic Neighborhood Brewery Tour through the mansion neighborhood, detailing the role Albany played in the global brewing industry.



The city celebrates the launch of Capital City Cycle Tour with an inaugural ride through the Warehouse District.

Capital City Cycle Tours

Discover Albany recruited this popular company to expand to Albany. We worked with Capitalize Albany Corporation and the City of Albany to help bring a 14-person bicycle tour company to the Warehouse District to help promote the Capital Craft Beverage Trail and related assets.



Black Heritage Tours

In 2016, Discover Albany worked with Black Heritage Tours - New York and I Love New York to help build and promote a new black heritage trail product in New York State. Discover Albany helped the business owner coordinate the tour, celebrate its launch, pitched the story to media, and hosted journalists for a FAM tour. The resulting product ties together four existing Albany heritage sites for an important and emotional visitor experience.



Historic Downtown Albany Food Tour

Discover Albany recruited Taste of Troy Food Tours to create a tour that focused on Albany's unique culinary scene. We worked with Capitalize Albany Corporation as well as local restaurants and historic sites to help facilitate and market the expansion, and helped launch the new offering with a ribbon-cutting at the Discover Albany Visitors Center. Since its launch in May 2018, the new food tour has hosted 251 visitors.



Upstate Kayak Rental

Discover Albany recruited this popular kayak company to add rental service to Albany. We worked with Capitalize Albany Corporation and the City of Albany to bring a self-serve kayak rental hub to Corning Boat Launch. The rental station will help create additional waterfront assets, and contribute to the Skyway project, creating additional reasons to enjoy the waterfront.

Discover Albany Brand

In 2017, the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau adopted a new brand, Discover Albany. The brand allowed the agency to put the destination front and center and eliminate audience confusion. Discover Albany also launched a new Albany.org website, with a section devoted to heritage tourism. The site serves as a launching point for marketing campaigns, with new content highlighting our partners and catering specifically to heritage tourists. The new brand and website are enabling us to serve as a rallying force for residents and visitors alike, and build a culture of appreciation for what we have right in our destination.

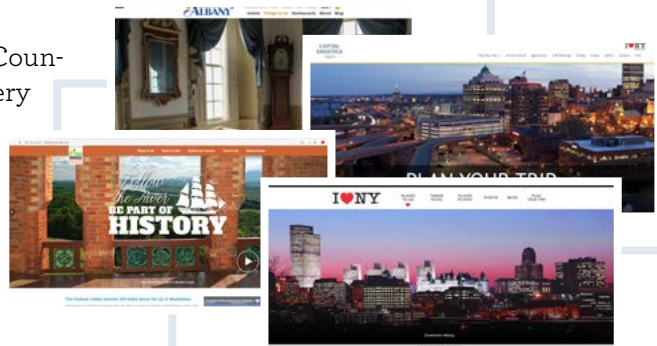
The Albany community celebrates the launch of the Discover Albany brand at the Discover Albany Video Launch Party at the Visitors Center, with special guests, Mayor Kathy Sheehan, Assemblyman John McDonald, Michele Vennard, Sheila Kelle, and 'Chipper,' the "great, great, great grandniece of Nipper."



Strategy 1.4
Increase visibility to Albany's cultural heritage sites, events and activities via signage, infrastructure improvements and web presence.

Regional Collaboration

As the officially recognized tourism promotion agency for Albany County, we are charged with bringing new visitors to this destination every year. To do that, we have a robust marketing and sales program. We also work with regional partners, including I Love New York, Hudson Valley Tourism, and the Capital-Saratoga Region. We collaborate with these partners and make sure that Albany County is represented in their marketing outreach; by supplying them with consistent content including listings, blog posts, events, and photos, we ensure that our heritage sites and attractions are represented on their websites, advertising campaigns, and social media.



Hospitality Grant Program

Each year, the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau Foundation, operated by the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region, awards thousands of dollars in grants to cultural and heritage sites to help create visitor-friendly programming, improve infrastructure, and market themselves. Since 2015, the grant program has awarded more than \$260,000 in grants to local not-for-profits to help expand their capacity.

Albany Visitor Kiosks

To support visitor information infrastructure, Discover Albany invested in the creation of a new Albany Visitor Kiosk program. The agency partnered with Omniex in 2016 to create and install digital kiosks at some of Albany's busiest tourist attractions, including the Albany Capital Center and the Times Union Center. The digital kiosks have a new visitor-friendly interface that uses data from Discover Albany's website to present information to visitors on a large-format touchscreen. In-market visitors can find attractions, events, and hotels at the touch of a button. The kiosk program is built to expand upon request; new locations are being added each year.



Discover Albany markets Albany's cultural heritage assets to visitors. Each year, working in concert with CHAT partners, Discover Albany launches print and digital advertising campaigns around our distinctive cultural assets.

To date, we've spent \$58,277 on advertising for heritage tourism. Discover Albany has taken out print ads that focus on heritage tourism and events in national publications, including *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Oprah*, *Traditional Home*, *Great Vacation Getaways*, *AAA World*, *AARP Magazine*, *Hearst Digital*, *TripAdvisor*, as well as state and regional publications like *New Jersey Star-Ledger*, *NYUp.com*, *New York By Rail*, *Capital Region Magazine*, *Saratoga Magazine*, *Destinations of New York State*, *Upstate Summer*, *Hudson Valley Ramble Guide*, *Hudson Valley Travel Regional Guide*, *All Over Albany*, and *WEQX*.

Each year, Discover Albany produces themed itineraries around Albany's historic assets. Each brochure includes recommendations about activities in Albany, sites to visit, events to enjoy, and restaurant recommendations. These printed brochures are distributed at our Discover Albany Visitors Center and available for download. Since 2016, we've produced six new themed itineraries:

Itineraries

Going Dutch:

Exploring Albany's Unique Dutch Past

From Clinton's Ditch to Eighth Wonder of the World:

Celebrating the Bicentennial of the Erie Canal

Family-Friendly Fun:

Albany County is a Playground for the Whole Family

Discover Albany's Shaker Heritage:

A Tranquil & Historic Getaway

Uncover the Hudson River School

America's First Art Movement

Something's Brewing in Albany:

Tour Albany's Craft Beverage Producers

Discover Albany has a robust social media program, which includes regular posts about heritage themes and events. Discover Albany also does paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram. Past campaigns have included Erie Canal, Tulip Fest, Tastes and Traditions, Haunted History, and Holiday Events.

We've also run an aggressive public relations campaign for Albany's heritage tourism. Between 2016 and 2018, we have created media releases, pitched stories, hosted travel journalists, created FAM tours, and coordinated interviews with local sites. This has resulted in 80 stories, worth estimated \$128,961. These stories, which feature Albany's historic sites, special events, and new programming, have appeared in national and international outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Irish Sun*, and *CBS*.

Strategy 1.5:
Market Albany's cultural heritage assets and products to increase visitation.

Annual Marketing Spends:

2016	-	\$21,354
2017	-	\$20,320
2018 (YTD)	-	\$16,603



Irish Sun Getaway Sweepstakes



Going Dutch Video Shoot



Travel Journalist on FAM Tour of USS Slater

Annual Media Value:

2016	-	\$27,500
2017	-	\$56,010
2018 (YTD)	-	\$45,451

Pohoes Falls



Jennings Landing



Lincoln Park



Washington Park Lakehouse



Washington Park



*View from
Boyd Thatcher Park*

