

ROOST Board Meeting Notes  
Tuesday, September 15, 2015

**NO QUORUM**

Board Members:

Mike Beglin  
Ed Finnerty  
Chris Ericson  
James Lemons  
Cris Lussi  
Bob Hockert  
Beth Hill (via phone)

Staff:

Jim McKenna  
Jasen Lawrence  
John Huttlinger  
Kerry Shannon Blinn

Guests:

Randy Preston  
Paul Casson  
Michelle Preston  
Bert Yost  
Aaron Kellet  
Alex Hall

Introductions by Bob Hockert, Whiteface Region Representative

Welcome by Randy Preston, Supervisor - Town of Wilmington

- Wilmington has some very good things going on
- Poorman's downhill is doing very well, town runs shuttle to bring people and their bikes up
- Total major facelift at the town beach
- New hiking trail, Cobble Lookout, 3/10 mile past toll booth on Franklin Falls road with an overlook by Santa's Workshop

Presentation by the Adirondack Wildlife Refuge (Alex Hall)

- <http://adirondackwildlife.org/>; 977 Springfield Road, Wilmington, NY
- Open five days a week, and it's free (but they do accept donations.)
- Overview of facility, and presentation of owls.
- Wolf talks, animal education, lectures, animal rehabilitation. Some animals are too injured to be released after rehabilitation, so they are kept for educational purposes.
- Refuge is trying to get new interpretive center close to wolf enclosure, would also be used for education.
- Funded partially through grants, and some donations. Board also solicits donations.
- Staffing is covered a lot by volunteers and interns.
- Cris Lussi: The Adirondack Wildlife Refuge did an event for the New York State Bar Association at our Golf House (Lake Placid Club), they were blown away. They thought you were the best, and that it was amazing. In addition, we have done some other ones with you, and have very good feedback.

Aaron Kellet, Whiteface Mountain

- Whiteface Mountain uses a lot of electricity and a lot of diesel fuel.
- Working on going green, and it will offset costs by \$14 million over the course of the solar contract. This will be through solar plants, and help make up roughly 40% of our power.
  - Partially utilizing some incentives to cover the cost of this.
- Also working on ease of access for visitors and doing a lot of trail work, and grants for snowmaking.
- Destination ski resorts make the majority of money over 4 weeks, and Christmas week is critical
- New Guest Experience Manager to work on this and staff education, ease of access, ease of use, etc.
- Summer attractions are a low hanging fruit, just need a few more pieces to really take advantage of this.

Michelle Preston, Whiteface Region Visitors Bureau

- The new trail mentioned by Supervisor Preston is on our trail map (handed out.)
- Blogs have been a huge hit (AdirondacksUSA emails) and have had people calling referencing them.
- Lake Placid News using photo from Wilmington Town Beach (new nature trail too.)
- 12th Annual Festival of the Colors is this weekend, and now includes a chili cook off.

Bert Yost, Whiteface Region Visitors Bureau Board of Directors

- There has been an increase in mountain biking all over town (Flume Trails, trail on Hardy Road, Poorman's Downhill)
- Fishing is a top draw for visitors in the summer
  - Stocking catch and release today

Paul Casson, Atmospheric Science Research Center - Whiteface Mountain Operations Manager

\*Handout attached.

- New York State Mesonet, funded by FEMA grant
- We will be one of the snow sites, with real time data available regarding snow fall, flood forecasting, soil profiles.
- National Weather Service is involved in the planning stages, and there are 125 sites (Whiteface is one.)
- Our MOU says to provide weather data for ski center as well.

Jim McKenna

- There will be a public hearing on Monday, September 28th regarding occupancy tax.
- 9:30 a.m., at the Essex County Courthouse.
- We're changing definitions as it applies to vacation rentals.
- There needs to be a presence at the public hearing showing support for this.
- If you cannot attend but would like to comment, please send an email to Judy Garrison, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors (J.Garrison@co.essex.ny.us)
- Only changing definitions, not the law itself.
- Kerry Shannon Blinn will send talking points to the ROOST board.

Mike Beglin offers a congratulations to Jim McKenna, on his upcoming induction to the Lake Placid Hall of Fame.

- Jim McKenna offers a light history of the organization, from the Convention Bureau and Chamber of Commerce to a combined Convention & Visitors Bureau. Starting budget was only around \$35,000.

I. Adoption of Agenda - no quorum

II. Approve Minutes - no quorum

III. Financials - John Huttlinger, CFO

- John Huttlinger did work with Karen Meister to add a P&L statement to help make sense of financials.
  - Still tweaking format, to make them more meaningful.
  - Has reviewed some key numbers on the revenue side. Items such as Occupancy Tax, convention commission, and summer internet sales, and those items are tracking well compared to prior years. As well as overall revenues year to date, and we're tracking pretty evenly. Same with overall expenses year to date.
  - Does not see any areas of particular concern right now.
  - Working on a monthly breakdown format to have for January.
  - Working with Alex Edwards, ROOST's new auditor.
  - Our fiscal year is a calendar year, but our contracts may have different term years.
  - Chris Ericson: Can we get a boiled down version, very simple expense and income, to show trend by month or quarter? We don't need perfect line by line, looking for general synopsis.
    - John Huttlinger: Yes, I try to give numbers to board in a format that is usable. Feedback is good.
    - Mike Beglin: Let's aim to have a format for next meeting.

IV. CEO Report & Departmental Updates - Jim McKenna

- Update on Regional Economic Development Council, first part of plan get finalized tomorrow.
- Upstate Revitalization Initiative is moving along, and has a component to include the Olympic Venues and getting them back up to international standards as well as becoming visitor attractions. Also, if this area ever wanted to be positioned for a future Olympic Winter Games, we would have to tie in with New York City. This falls in line with the IOC's Agenda

2020, and would help tackle transportation issues to area at the same time. Thirdly, the Olympic Training Center, and where Adirondack Health is now (AMC Lake Placid), looking into turning that into a global, elite sports center and expanding the sports that use it. Would include for-profit sports such as IRONMAN or CAN/AM.

- Attended Adirondack Cultural Symposium.
  - James Lemons: Meeting of all cultural organizations in the Park, talking specifically on working together and making this a cultural destination. It was a really good first step.
- Had a conference call regarding IRONMAN. We offered them a marketing plan to sweeten the pot if we do get awarded the 2017 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship. We left feeling pretty positive, and should know shortly. The plan is a way we can enhance without offering direct dollars.
  - Jasen Lawrence: Marketing plan focused on how we would push the event as an international event, and build brand for both Lake Placid and IRONMAN. Aim towards athletes, spectators, volunteers.
  - Mike Beglin: He (Steve Meckfessel, with IRONMAN) asked the “buyer questions”. The questions that I as a buyer would be asking, and he seemed excited about it being able to start the marketing right away.
  - Two day event. 2,500 men race on Sunday. 2,000 women race on Saturday.
  - Week after Labor Day, with significant marketing value, and would help establish us with the IRONMAN brand and triathlons. Training aspect of that event would help us tremendously.
  - Our bottom line was hugely helped by us doing this entirely in house, both the plan and future execution of the plan if we’re successful.
- Met with USA Luge, working on them staying in Lake Placid (USA Luge sent RFPs out for a host city, which we responded to.) They are close to a decision.
- Mayor Randall and Jim McKenna are going to Lausanne in October to attend the World Union of Olympic Cities.
  - IOC has just added a new session on Agenda 2020, which will be beneficial to us if Lake Placid were to pursue a future Olympic Winter Games.

#### V. Marketing Report - Jasen Lawrence

\*Handout attached.

- We are agile in our marketing initiatives and have ability to turn on a dime, which is crucial.
  - Example: We put together the IRONMAN Marketing Plan in a couple of days.
  - Same with blogs and video content.
- Videographer starting October 5th - Blake Courtright
  - Blake Courtright did the 46ers film.
  - Shaun Ondak still on staff, this is an addition.
  - We are behind on level of video content we should have right now.
  - Blake Courtright is bringing some of his own equipment.
  - All developed content will be property of ROOST.
  - James Lemons: Blake Courtright’s film (46ers film) sold out for us (LPCA) and we turned away 40 people opening night.
  - YouTube is the second largest search engine behind Google, so it is really important for us to have video content.
  - Mike Beglin: What about Instagram, how does that do?
  - Jasen Lawrence: Lake Placid has an Instagram account, and it does pretty well. We will start to roll that out to the other regions in the coming months. We’re changing the way that social media is done in house. Previously it was handled by Kim Rielly and Jess Collier, and Brooke O’Neil has been doing the Facebook and Twitter for Lake Placid. Some of our other social media accounts may roll out to other staff that are capable of handling it, to get that unique real time voice.
- VisitMalone just started (website and social media.)
- Having staff in house to do all the media has really helped.
- New server when Jasen Lawrence started, which is upgradable. We can add data capacity, and should be able to add for another two and a half to three years.
  - We have also started an initiative to tag photos and data on the server, so everything is labeled.
  - Longterm goal (maybe six to nine months) is to make the photo library available for local businesses to use. We produce more photos than we’ll ever use.

- Jasen Lawrence: Overview of marketing handout.
  - Sessions versus users. Users is unique visits. If one user visits the site twice, that's one user but two sessions.
- Jim McKenna: Jasen Lawrence has brought ORDA staff to our table to get them on our page, they attended our weekly marketing meeting this week. Jasen Lawrence has also been invited to attend ORDA's marketing meetings.
  - Our editorial calendar is 3-4 months out, we plan ahead.
- Cris Lussi: Is there a struggle with hotels getting information on time with ORDA, and how do we help with this?
  - Jasen Lawrence: Liz Mezzeti is responsible for all three ORDA mountains (Whiteface, Gore, Bellayre.) We're working on our relationship with them, and getting us on the same marketing page.
- The Toronto ski show is our lead, and we have several hotel properties on board as well as ORDA.
- Jasen Lawrence is going to a conference regarding millennials and marketing.
- Jim McKenna: Maryjane Lawrence sent some points, as she couldn't be here.
  - National Ski Council Federation went really well.
  - ESSAE event this week. If anyone wants to go, ROOST will pay.
  - New York State Library Association. This group was here years ago, and has returned to Lake Placid.
  - Centerplate lost a few staff, and we're concerned with lack of management right now. There is no catering manager and we are talking to ORDA and Centerplate about this.

## VI. New Business

- Nominations (due November 1)
  - Terms up: Mike Beglin, Kate Fish, Ed Finnerty, Bob Hockert, Cristina Lussi.
    - All eligible for another term.
  - Schroon Lake Region - need to replace Sharon Piper still
  - Cris Lussi: Do we need to cover every region with a representative?
    - Yes, according to our bylaws.
    - Jim McKenna has interest from someone on Schroon Lake to join board
  - Nominating committee: Ed Finnerty
  - Cris Lussi: Regarding the bylaws, they might state attendance requirements. Also please send the updated bylaws, and make sure up to date notes are on the website.
- Next board meeting would usually fall on October 13th. Jim McKenna leaves for Lausanne on October 8th. Have next board meeting a week early, on October 6th.

## VII. Adjournment

\*There is an event at Heaven Hill Farm in a couple of weeks, to introduced Team Lake Placid. They are a youth team being sent to Innsbruck for the International Children's Games in January. ROOST Board Members should have received an invite.



## New York State's Mesoscale Weather Network

More Stations. More Data. Better Forecasts.

<http://nysmesonet.org/>

### **What is a "Mesonet?"**

A mesonet is a particular type of observing network, with weather stations spaced close enough together to adequately sample "mesoscale" weather. "Meso-" refers to weather phenomena that range in size from less than a mile to hundreds of miles long and last a few minutes to hours.

The idea of a network of weather stations (a mesonet) is nothing new, and scientists have long known its value. The first "mesonet" was deployed hundreds of years ago, with weather stations deployed across much of central Europe. However, data had to be collected with hand-held instruments, with the results gathered by mail. Fortunately, today's technology now permits real-time data collection throughout the depth of the atmosphere.

The New York State Mesonet will ultimately consist of 125 state-of-the-art environmental monitoring stations and will serve as the foundation of an Early Warning Severe Weather Detection network for the entire State of New York. Mesonet sites will be distributed statewide with every county across New York having at least one or more sites. The Mesonet will provide local, updated weather information in real-time 24/7 to government, academic, and private sector partners as well as the general public. The Mesonet was designed and developed by research scientists at the State University of New York at Albany's Atmospheric Sciences Research Center, and Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences and through collaboration with the Oklahoma Mesonet.

### **Site Hosts Wanted!**

We are in the process of selecting sites for this network. Large, cleared areas are ideal for Mesonet stations, such as ranches and farms. If you would be interested in hosting a Mesonet site, please contact Dr. Jerald Brotzge at [jbrotzge@albany.edu](mailto:jbrotzge@albany.edu). If you would like to learn more about the NYS Mesonet, please visit our website at [www.nysmesonet.org](http://www.nysmesonet.org).

# Highlights

thru August 2015

- AdirondacksUSA.com now contains 733 spins (500+ coming)
- Adirondack Experience: Leads up 390%
- Lake Placid: First Infographic Test: 2,141 views
- Whiteface Region: Pageviews up 22%
- Tupper Lake: Facebook Page broke 7,000+ followers
- Saranac Lake: Time on Page up 13.2% (now 1:15)
- Lake Champlain: Blog traffic up 302.9%
- Schroon Lake Region: Events up 3.4%
- VisitMalone.com Site Launched on July 17th

# Year to Date Site Sessions

thru August 2015

<i>Site</i>	<i>Y/Y Growth</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Adirondack Experience	<b>309%</b>	<b>177,813</b>
Lake Champlain Region	<b>31.36%</b>	<b>22,124</b>
Lake Placid	<b>17.66%</b>	<b>181,451</b>
Saranac Lake	<b>59.11%</b>	<b>94,265</b>
Schroon Lake Region	<b>42.14%</b>	<b>26,518</b>
Tupper Lake	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Visit Malone	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Whiteface Region	<b>41.44%</b>	<b>21,855</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>38.34%</b>	<b>87,338</b>

# Sessions vs Users

thru August 2015

<i>Site</i>	<i>Sessions</i>	<i>Users</i>
Adirondack Experience	223,587	178,823
Lake Champlain Region	87,848	72,736
Lake Placid	1,137,119	752,801
Saranac Lake	238,145	177,967
Schroon Lake Region	84,320	65,075
Tupper Lake	163,918	121,066
Whiteface Region	70,126	54,397
Visit Malone	5,745	4,735
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>2,010,808</b>	<b>1,427,600</b>

# Web-based Goal Conversions

thru August 2015

<i>Site</i>	<i>Y/Y Growth</i>	<i>YTD</i>
Adirondack Experience	1,937%	5,099
Lake Champlain Region	165.8%	4,960
Lake Placid	43.2%	11,023
Saranac Lake	124.4%	3,398
Schroon Lake Region	534.2%	1,205
Tupper Lake	N/A	2,873
Visit Malone	N/A	807
Whiteface Region	7,154%	1,596
<b>Average / Total</b>	<b>1,659.77%</b>	<b>30,961</b>