

ROOST Board Meeting Notes

Tuesday, August 11, 2015

**NO QUORUM**

Board members:

Mike Beglin

Bob Hockert

Marc Galvin

Melinda Little

Sarah Wilson

Laura O'Brien (phone)

Ed Finnerty (phone)

*\*no quorum*

Staff:

John Huttlinger

Jim McKenna

Kim Rielly

Maryjane Lawrence

Jasen Lawrence

Kerry Shannon Blinn

URI Update

Jim McKenna: We can review a few larger items. We don't have a quorum but we can still give an update.

- Upstate Revitalization Initiative (URI): There are three separate awards of \$500 million (\$100 million over 5 years).
  - Our region has divided into three leadership groups, Jim McKenna is co-chair of the Tourism & Community of Centers Leadership Group. Going to submit draft of proposal to the council on Friday (8/14/15). One area we're working on is dealing with tourism facilities development and revitalization, with a number of actions under it. The plan would affect lodging, investments/investors, tourism venues, downtown economic stimulus, connecting with metropolitan areas, transportation, etc.
  - Plan also will include aspects for the Olympic Venues - there are a couple of things that need to happen to make the venues sustainable. The leadership group has been in contact with a few high level sports related consulting firms. Executive committee got together (7/31/15) to discuss a financial commitment to implementing the plan, \$500,000 over four years. The plan will help us with tourism efforts in the future as well.
  - Adirondack/1000 Islands Sports and Events Commission is the applicant for the Olympic related actions. The commission is being retooled from the "Adirondack Sports Commission" and will include representatives from the seven North Country counties.
- USA Luge has put out an RFP and Lake Placid is working on a proposal that we're helping with.
  - Image impact for the region.

Conference Sales Commission

Jim McKenna: Our conference sales team has been working on the commission structure. When our office books rooms we get 10% room commission, that evolved out of the 70's when few hotels had meeting space to offset our expenses when booking groups. Historically hotels would just add the 10% on top of their rates for the quote, which raises the rate the visitor pays. Using Essex County Transportation is cheaper than in the past when we would have to book private transportation for the groups. Our sales team is showing an increase in sales and new events coming to the area. Our office is quickly getting known as the go-to office for meetings and conventions in this area. That squeezes the hotels a bit and adding the 10% commission makes us non-competitive. Our recommendation is to drop the 10% commission to 3%. This will still give us the flexibility with expenses. Bottom line is getting a group here in a quiet time.

- Mike Beglin: What does that do to the revenue stream? From what to what?
- Jim McKenna: We haven't really looked at that as a bottom line revenue, we look at that as a way to offset our costs and expenses we incur with groups.
- Mike Beglin: Either way it's still a line item, you're still going to be offsetting it.

Tuesday, August 11, 2015

- Jim McKenna: Last year I think that our gross commissions were in the \$60,000 - \$70,000 range, and our expenses were quite a bit under that. Also, conference attendees pay occupancy tax.
- Mike Beglin: Will we be able to make it up in more volume, because hotels will work with you quicker and easier?
- Jim McKenna: I think it will put the hotels in a much better position to work with us. It will help us get groups into Lake Placid when we're relatively quiet.
- Jim McKenna: It is a policy change, it's been in effect since the 70's.
- Maryjane Lawrence: Many times there are third party meeting planners involved, and they have a 10% commission. So when they have a commission and we have a commission, it makes our rates uncompetitive. We would voluntarily reduce our commission to make it work. We would like to get a decision quickly, there are proposals out that are delayed for this commission change.
- Mike Beglin: The sales staff can do a one-time change to make the contract or proposal work, they just can't change the policy without the board approval. So if you need that change to make it work this time, you have the ability to do that. That would be part of your everyday administration.
- Mike Beglin: Ed, can we put out an email to the board and have them vote via email?
- Ed Finnerty: Yes.
- Can't vote tonight, will put this information out to the board via email.
- Jim McKenna: I don't think it will affect our bottom line. It's currently impeding our sales.
- Mike Beglin: If we find that it's not working, we'll readdress it. John can keep an eye on it. For now, we'll send out an email to the board, including that we don't think it will hurt our bottom line, that it should increase volume, and that John Huttlinger will keep an eye on it so we can readdress it if we need to.
- Mike Beglin: Anything to add from the people here? - No.

#### Financial

Mike Beglin: John, is there anything outstanding in finances?

John Huttlinger: We did add a new report, which is a statement of activities for ROOST. Before you had been getting a balance sheet, no P&L. So there's a P&L, and it's a work in process. There's going to have to be some tweaking, the numbers aren't quite lining up where they belong. We can refine these as we go forward, to have on a year to date basis instead of on a full year. It's not really apples to apples but we hope to get to a monthly style budget.

Sarah Wilson: Can the system generate year to date this year to compare year to date for the previous year?

John Huttlinger: Not sure at this point, the accounting system changed. Karen Meister did a comparison on the old system to this system, but it doesn't quite line up yet.

#### Vacation Rental Occupancy Tax

Jim McKenna: I've been meeting at the County (Essex) regarding the vacation rental occupancy tax, and we think that we're pretty close to done. The County could be acting on it as quickly as September. What's been recognized is that there is no need to change the existing law. We did a very quick inventory of private rental facilities, which is not complete, but we're over 500 facilities county-wide. We're estimating somewhere around 800 when we're done. In regards to the dispersal of the vacation rental occupancy tax collections, we've developed something that we think the Supervisors will agree with, including a tourism enhancement fund for the towns to receive some money by application and identification that it will benefit tourism. Fish Hatchery would also receive a fund.

Other - ESSAE is hosting a Board Symposium at the High Peaks Resort on September 17th and 18th.

ROOST will pay for board members that wish to attend.

CVB is sponsoring the curling reception on Thursday, September 17th.

<https://www.essaes.org/events/?EID=7f964851-4e8b-4bc2-a03c-89411a40a4f7>

### Marketing - *\*Handout attached\**

Jasen Lawrence: There are four slides on the handout. Just a few highlights: [VisitMalone.com](http://VisitMalone.com) launched. Franklin County model is similar to Essex County now in that it has multiple sites based on region. We have no data from previous years on usage. With paid campaigns for Franklin County, there were some things already in motion when we took over, so we're seeing that through. For example: the Franklin County Fair ads.

Mike Beglin: Can we consolidate our billing so businesses aren't receiving multiple invoices? One for membership, one for listings, etc.

### Communications - *\*Handout attached\**

Kim Rielly: MarketNY grant that was awarded to the North Country counties. One aspect is for a blogger fam tour, which is happening this week. They are experiencing many things around the region, and we'll continue to get exposure from this.

- In regards to board communications, Kim Rielly is preparing a "State of the Adirondacks" press release which will be from the Board. This will be a summary style report to the local community.
- Kim Rielly and Jasen Lawrence also met with some lodging properties to discuss communications and marketing, to collaborate efforts.

### Regions

#### Saranac Lake

Hotel projects are quiet right now. Hotel Saranac says they'll be gearing things up again in late August, delayed for asbestos removal and capacity for workers, as it's their busy season. Quite a few CFAs were submitted for Saranac Lake this year, including some nice Main Street beautification efforts. Sears is closing, don't know plans for building.

#### Hamilton County

Tourism in communities was great this summer, visitor numbers up across the board. Lake Pleasant Lodge applied for a grant through CFA process, don't know status.

### Next board meeting

- The second Tuesday is September 8th, and falls the day after Labor Day. In addition, it is the same day as the LPBA's nighttime meeting. We'll make an exception and have the meeting on the third Tuesday, which is September 15th.
- Next board meeting will be in the Whiteface Region at the Atmospheric Science Research Center on Whiteface.
- There will be a tour up to the summit ahead of time. Meeting will be at main center.

# Highlights

thru July 2015

- AdirondacksUSA.com now contains 702 spins
- Adirondack Experience: Organic Search up 51%
- Lake Placid: Social Traffic up 155%
- Whiteface Region: Average Time on page up 10%
- Tupper Lake: YouTube video views up 14.5%
- Saranac Lake: conversions to leads up 99%
- Lake Champlain: Targeted campaign traffic up 1,193%
- Schroon Lake Region: Activities up 19.3%
- VisitMalone.com Site Launched on July 17th

## What we're talking about right now.

- Essex County
  - Camping, Paddling, Boating, Cycling, Mt. Biking, Conference Center, Hiking / Fall Hiking
- Franklin County
  - Fishing, County Fair, Golf, Camping
- Hamilton County
  - Camping, Fishing, Paddling

# Year to Date Site Stats

thru July 2015

<i>Site</i>	<i>Y/Y Growth</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Adirondack Experience	<b>336.41%</b>	<b>152,668</b>
Lake Champlain Region	<b>31.27%</b>	<b>17,446</b>
Lake Placid	<b>15.77%</b>	<b>127,698</b>
Saranac Lake	<b>62.28%</b>	<b>75,733</b>
Schroon Lake Region	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>21,367</b>
Tupper Lake	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Visit Malone	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Whiteface Region	<b>43.52%</b>	<b>18,264</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>98.01%</b>	<b>78,982</b>

# Time on Site

thru July 2015

<i>Site</i>	<i>Sessions</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Blog Time</i>
Adirondack Experience	<b>198,049</b>	<b>1m 21s</b>	<b>3m 32s</b>
Lake Champlain Region	<b>73,240</b>	<b>1m 23s</b>	<b>2m 50s</b>
Lake Placid	<b>937,604</b>	<b>1m 22s</b>	<b>2m 59s</b>
Saranac Lake	<b>197,328</b>	<b>1m 14s</b>	<b>3m 8s</b>
Schroon Lake Region	<b>69,602</b>	<b>1m 11s</b>	<b>2m 58s</b>
Tupper Lake	<b>133,969</b>	<b>1m 16s</b>	<b>3m 37s</b>
Whiteface Region	<b>60,235</b>	<b>1m 44s</b>	<b>3m 27s</b>
Visit Malone	<b>1,805</b>	<b>1m 12s</b>	<b>3m 32s</b>
<b>Total / Average</b>	<b>1,671,832</b>	<b>1m 20s</b>	<b>3m 13s</b>

## Communications Activity Summary (June - Aug 11, 2015)

- 6/24: Distributed news release: volunteer opportunities for Ironman
- 6/25: Attended Lake Placid lodging properties meeting - presented marketing strategies and communications plan to group of property representatives along with Jasen Lawrence.
- 6/29-30: KR attended NYSDMO meeting on behalf of Jim McKenna.
- 7/6: Katie Stuart, communications intern started 8 week stint at ROOST. She is working primarily in the Tupper Lake office to support visitor service efforts, and writing blogs and drafting press releases etc.
- Provided promotional copy for Lake Placid Lacrosse program
- 7/16: Attended Lake Placid lodging properties meeting - responded to feedback and updated monthly marketing communications report format.
- 7/20: Distributed news release: VisitMalone Launch
- Wrote blogs for [VisitMalone.com](http://VisitMalone.com), [schroonlakeregion.com](http://schroonlakeregion.com) and [lakechamplainregion.com](http://lakechamplainregion.com) (one during vacation - bonus points).
- 7/27: Wrote editorial for Lake Placid News regarding Lake Placid community's response to the fire during Ironman weekend
- Provided quotes for Wild Center press release re: Wild Walk first month success
- Distributed bi-monthly ROOST News to marketing partner email database
- 8/4: Distributed news release: Benefit for LP Main St. Fire Victims
- Responded to inquiries for information and materials for [USAtoday.com](http://USAtoday.com), AM New York, Smithsonian Channel, Rand McNally publications, Westchester Magazine, Times Union, MD Magazine, Travel & Leisure and many local media requests
- Currently hosting 8 blogger/online influencers for the Eat, Play, Love NY tour - 8/9-15. This is a part of a MarketNY grant awarded to the North Country Region, administered by ROOST. The program includes itinerary planning with activities, lodging and meals, transportation, and the development of an aggregate website to capture all of the social and blog posts created before, during and after the tour - [eplny.com](http://eplny.com) .

## NUMBERS TO KNOW

### To date in 2015

- 24 Interviews conducted
- 26 Media hosted
- 86 Media Inquiries Fulfilled
- 43k Total Facebook Fans
- 12k Total Twitter Followers
- 3k Instagram Followers

## IN THE NEWS - Media Clippings June 1 to date

DATE	CONTENT: About Destination or DMO	PUB/WEBSITE	TITLE	LINK	TOWNS
Summer 2	Dest	<b>AmericA Magazine</b>	De Great Camps van de Adirondacks	PDF saved	Newcomb, Blue Mountain Lake
6/1/15	Dest	<b>Le Journal De Montreal</b>	4 Summer discoveries	<a href="http://www.jou">http://www.jou</a>	Tupper, Schroon, Placid
6/2/15	Dest	<b>Canoe and Kayak</b>	Destination of the Week: Lake Placid, New York	<a href="http://www.ca">http://www.ca</a>	Lake Placid
6/3/15	DMO	<b>Tupper Lake Free Press</b>	Chamber ROOST open house celebrated	JPG saved	Tupper
6/4/15	DMO	<b>LPN</b>	Congrats to our top volunteers	<a href="http://lakeplac">http://lakeplac</a>	Placid
6/4/15	DMO	<b>Valley News</b>	Lake Placid makes cut for Ironman 70.3 World Championship	<a href="http://www.va">http://www.va</a>	Lake Placid
6/13/15	Dest	<b>NY Times</b>	New Nature Trail and Interactive Museum in the Adirondacks	<a href="http://mobile.r">http://mobile.r</a>	Tupper/Wild Walk
6/24/15	Dest	<b>Seven Days</b>	Hiking, Biking and Paddling Trails in the ADK	<a href="http://www.se">http://www.se</a>	Lake Placid
6/25/15	Dest	<b>Coup de Pouce</b>	Adirondacks: 7 must-see attractions	<a href="http://www.co">http://www.co</a>	Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake
6/26/15	DMO	<b>Press-Republican</b>	Prison break hasn't affected tourism	<a href="http://www.pr">http://www.pr</a>	Adks
6/29/15	Dest	<b>am New York</b>	New Wild Walk like a High Line in the Adirondack forest	<a href="http://www.an">http://www.an</a>	Tupper/Wild Walk
7/1/15	Dest	<b>Jetsetter</b>	50 States of Awesome	<a href="http://www.jet">http://www.jet</a>	Tupper/Wild Walk
7/15/15	DMO	<b>DenPubs</b>	Tourism officials urge community support for Ironman site visit	<a href="http://www.va">http://www.va</a>	Lake Placid
7/16/15	Dest	<b>Newsday</b>	Mountain weekend getaways near NYC	<a href="http://www.ne">http://www.ne</a>	Saranac Lake
7/19/15	DMO	<b>Press-Republican</b>	Half-Ironman sought for Essex County	<a href="http://www.pr">http://www.pr</a>	Lake Placid
7/21/15	DMO	<b>Malone Telegram</b>	Tourism promotion group upgrades Malone website	<a href="http://www.my">http://www.my</a>	Malone
7/23/15	DMO	<b>Press-Republican</b>	Redesigned website showcases Malone	<a href="http://www.pr">http://www.pr</a>	Malone
7/25/15	DMO	<b>Albany Times Union</b>	Tourist season booming this summer in upstate New York	<a href="http://www.tim">http://www.tim</a>	summer season
8/1/15	Dest	<b>Knoxville News Sentinel</b>	There's room to spare in the Adirondacks for year-round activities	<a href="http://www.kn">http://www.kn</a>	LP/Tupper/Blue Mt. Lake
8/10/15	Dest	<b>Albany Times Union Blog</b>	Tucked away at the Tamarac in Saranac Lake, NY	<a href="http://blog.tim">http://blog.tim</a>	Saranac Lake

**-Submitted on August 11, 2015 by Kim Rielly, director of communications**