

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

GREENE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM AND PLANNING

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- **Quantum Fund Loan Activity:** There were a total of 70 active grants/loans in the portfolio as tracked through our Grant Management Tracking System (GMS) at the close of the 2016 fourth quarter.
 - New Loan activity in 2016 from the county's Quantum Fund leveraged private dollar investments totaling \$193,000 for the creation of 10 new full time equivalent jobs. The Quantum Fund loaned a total of \$70,000 to two businesses, Sally Hamilton Wine & Spirits in Athens and Douglas & Eldert, dba Reed Street Bottle Shop in Coxsackie. Microenterprise loans ranged from a loan for HiLo, LLC, a new coffee shop on Main Street in Catskill, The Syrup Chick, a maple syrup business in Lexington; Pippy's Food Truck, Palenville; Mansion & Reed Guest House & General Store in Coxsackie ; and Marylyn Sewing in Greenville.
 - In comparison to 2015 loan portfolio activity, while one additional loan was made, \$190,000 less funds were dispersed. Over the last three years, the interest in larger loans from the Quantum Fund has decreased, largely due to low interest rates available from commercial lenders and the availability of loans and grants from our Microenterprise Program. Large development projects, such as Ferguson, Crossroads Brewing, and the Lumberyard are eligible to receive grants directly from New York State economic development programs through the annual Regional Economic Development Council competition. On the other hand, the origination and approval of loans/grants through our Microenterprise Program grants from New York State remains strong and is growing. This is largely due to our Buy/Invest in Greene business advertising and the increase of small entrepreneurs in the market seeking start-up capital.
 - One resolution was approved authorizing legal action on a Quantum fund loan which resulted in payments to bring the arrears current. No further legal action was required.
 - Eight Greene County loan recipients paid their loans in full: Kaaterskill Associates (Cairo); Leap Inn, Inc (Windham); Lighthouse Learning & Wellness (Coxsackie); Dr. Curtis Halstead (Coxsackie); Cat Trax, Inc. (Catskill); Catskill Mountain Country Store (Catskill)(Disaster Loan); Arthur J Young & Son (Prattsville)(Disaster Loan); Thyme & Place Limited (Windham)(Disaster Loan).
- **Direct Economic Development Projects (CDBG):** The Department completed a \$266,000 grant from the NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) on behalf of Ferguson Enterprises, the plumbing/HVAC warehouse that is nearing completion in Coxsackie. Funds were distributed

primarily for equipment and fixtures. Twenty-five jobs were pledged for the CDBG project, and Ferguson documented over 100 positions created. The CDBG grant was part of a State-led investment package that attracted the Virginia-based company to Greene County. The State has completed its monitoring of the grant and the Department is expecting that the State will conduct its final close-out of the grant in 2017. The Department also continues to work with the New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR) for an open grant with New York Spring Water. In 2014, monitoring was conducted by the OCR for the New York Spring Water economic development project. In 2015, final close-out requests were submitted. While no significant issues were found by the State, the Department is waiting for the State to provide the final close-out certification. The Department expects to receive final close-out of New York Spring Water in 2017.

- **Infrastructure Grant:** The Department obtained a 2014 CFA Capital Region Economic Development Council grant administered through Empire State Development (ESD) for \$37,500 to conduct an infrastructure study. The study began in 2015, with the selection of Delaware Engineering as the consultant. Tasks completed included capacity analysis of the sewer and water treatment plants throughout the county; inventory of publicly owned property; and inventory of available sites around the county with public infrastructure as potential development sites that can be used to attract new businesses and business expansions. The project is complete with final reporting and close-out of the grant expected in the first quarter of 2017.

- **Microenterprise Grant (CDBG):** In December of 2016, the Department was awarded a new 2016 CFA Capital Region Economic Development Council Microenterprise Assistance Program grant for \$200,000, administered through the NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) for small business development. Eight grants and grant/loan combinations will be made to businesses, with an emphasis on Main Street businesses and targeted business sectors. Two Microenterprise Assistance Program training classes were held in 2016, with 21 current and potential entrepreneurs in attendance. The 2011 Microenterprise program grant previously funded by New York State received final close-out in 2016, and the 2014 Microenterprise program was monitored by the State and should receive final close-out by the State in 2017.

- **Workforce Training Partnerships:** The Department also continues to maintain a close relationship with the Columbia-Greene Counties Workforce Development Office. Greene County serves on the Board of Directors, acts as the Corporate Secretary, and Chairman of the Business Services Committee. The Department also participates in the larger eleven county Capital District Workforce Investment Consortium, and works with both the New York State Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Albany and with the Mid-Hudson SBDC, as they cover the Mountaintop.

- The Workforce Development Office, located at Columbia-Greene Community College, is delivering programs, such as: On the Job Training, Enhanced Career Services, Dislocated Worker Programs, and programs for job applicants, such as computer skills, resume writing and review services. The Workforce Development Office also organizes Career Fairs, and

regional cooperative programs oriented towards high school student pathways targeted towards job opportunities in Greene County and the Capital District.

- **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE), Technical Assistance:** Business retention and expansion is a primary task. Staff meets and/or talks with existing business owners on a regular basis to determine needs and whether we might assist them. Staff also assists businesses with grant applications they are submitting to the state or federal government. Staff responds to inquiries from businesses and works closely with the county IDA in this regard. Staff manages the Revolving Loan Portfolio, tracks monthly payments, prepares quarterly financials, tracks delinquent payments and works with loan recipients that are delinquent, and coordinates necessary actions with the bank, the Quantum Fund Committee and the County Attorney.

- **Business Attraction Program (Buy In Greene, Invest in Greene):** www.buyingreene.com. In 2016, the Legislature allocated the Buy/Invest In Greene program a one hundred and twenty thousand dollar budget which enabled us to grow and expand the program throughout the year in the following capacity:

- **Website Updates and Traffic:** The website upgrade and new content completed throughout 2016 accounted for a significant amount of growth in website traffic. Our total website sessions saw a 41% increase, our total user increased 37% and total page views increased 28%, to almost 100,000 page views. Our desktop views declined 25%, but that's offset by mobile device usage increasing almost 150%, together with tablet usage increasing 13%. This information proves that the shift continues from desktop usage to mobile devices. Direct traffic saw an increase of 47% and organic traffic increase was above 35%.

- **Social Media:** The social media campaign is cost effective and has leveraged our ability to connect with our target audience. We continue to post and blog on all of our social media networks, Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Google Plus, Pinterest and YouTube promoting local business news and highlights that are relevant to the consumer, business owners and investors. Our social media campaign resulted in tremendous amount of growth up 193% year over year. We have over 7600 social media followers, a majority of them being women. We added over 2600 new Facebook followers in 2016 and over 800 Twitter followers.

- **Digital Advertising:** The campaign continues to target the Metro NY area, NJ, CT, Hudson Valley and the Capital Region. The advertising campaign consists of banner ads, display advertising, sky scraper ads, and home page takeover advertising. Our seasonal consumer engagement supported by digital and social media posts resulted in over 25,000 sessions in 2016. Special advertising in support of the Ride-Sharing Initiative was also served in Hudson, New York with the goal of increasing interest from Amtrak visitors to visit Greene County. This campaign used a marketing message of "Catskill is Uber Cool, Get Your Lyft to Greene County".

- **Print Advertising:** We continue to support the Greene County Chamber with ad placement in the annual directory promoting our Buy & Invest campaign. In addition we also placed a holiday seasonal ad in the Greene County Penny saver, promoting small business local shopping. Ads were also placed in the Chronogram Magazine which featured an article on Catskill's Main St, and the Hudson Valley Wine Magazine that was featuring Microbrewery and Micro Distillery's businesses on the rise.
- **Radio Advertising:** Radio advertising was placed during the holiday buying season with WRIP-Rip97.9 "Give the Gift of Greene" and WDST100.1 Radio Woodstock "Do You Go Greene".
- **Business Attraction Marketing:** In 2016 we began using the inbound marketing software "HubSpot" allowing us to engage and track consumer and business interaction in response to our advertising. Each interaction is recorded and funnels the site visitor through a sequence that captures and delivers specific prospect information and allows us to personally follow up with them regarding their small business needs. Whether it's the creation of a business plan, financing, or looking for a possible location, the prospective business owner is contacted first through a series of emails, and then personally to arrange a meeting with the development "team" to speak with them, discuss our loan programs, answer any questions they may have, and arrange for site visits of properties. This concierge service has proven to be a valuable resource. A large part of our website success is our lead generating landing page "Starting a New Business"; this page offers a downloadable Ebook with pertinent business information. The results of our ongoing marketing and campaign efforts have produced more than 50 direct meetings or inquiries into our office, and 25 new businesses established within the County. In addition, many of these businesses have also participated in our loan programs. At the end of 2016 Hubspot Lead Generation resulted in 296 downloads.

 - This year we added two new Ebooks to the website, "Starting a Microbrewery in Greene County NY" and "The Time is Right to Start a Micro Distillery in Greene County NY". At the end of 2016 we had 64 Microbrewery and 30 Micro Distillery downloads.
 - With the success of our inbound marketing eBooks "Starting a Small Business" we decided to add a third addition; this is a three phase step by step support and guidance series on starting a small business. These were started mid-year and they are only accessible once they have downloaded one or more of the three original eBooks. At the end of the year we had a total of 21 downloads.
 - We still continue to use content marketing and send out three E-newsletters every month, individually targeting the consumer, investor, and business prospects. There are over 4,000 businesses in the county with over 1,000 directly participating and listed in the Buy/Invest in Greene database. The E-newsletters are sent to our

database of almost 1600 Greene County businesses, elected officials, foundations, not for profits and others that have opted to receive our E-newsletters. In addition, the E-newsletters are also sent to our database of almost 1600 consumers that have signed up to receive information about the program. Our recent efforts with the Invest In Greene advertising has developed into a database of over 600 prospective business owners or entrepreneurs potentially looking at opening a business in Greene County. This has doubled from 2015.

- We continue to populate the “Success Stories” page of the website with up to date and relevant stories that are happening around the County. There were a total of 24 stories created and supported by social media posts and E-newsletter. This resulted in over 3000 reads, shares and reposts.
- In 2016 we created designated town web pages to showcase their uniqueness and business opportunities. To date we have built-out features for Catskill, Cairo, Durham, Windham, and the Hunter area. For 2017, Prattsville, Coxsackie, Athens and New Baltimore areas will be implemented. The website landing pages are composed of a brief description of the town, its demographics, a map of the downtown areas with current business listings and available space listings for new and existing business opportunities. We created a downtown map area linking to featured business listings. Also included are additional links to pertinent information like Google Maps, Zillow, Yelp, and the Greene County web map. To promote these featured town pages we provide digital and social media advertising which has generated almost forty-five thousand visits.
- **Buy Local Event:** Attended one Buy Local Expo held in Columbia County at the Basilica in Hudson which was co-sponsored by the Greene & Columbia Counties Chambers of Commerce.
- **Partnership with the Chambers of Commerce:** Throughout 2016 we continued to work with the local and county Chambers of Commerce visiting businesses and business owners throughout the County to familiarize them with our program and sign up their businesses on the website. Additionally, staff attended business-after-hours events along with monthly Chamber meetings both regionally and locally. We maintain a close partnership with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce and together we worked the region promoting and creating awareness of our new brand. In addition to attending regular meetings there were three Chamber workshops designed to present our Buy In Greene/Invest In Greene program and to encourage business participation and assist them with signing up with the program.
- **Second Home Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis:** The Department retained Camoin Associates and KathodeRay Media to provide an economic and fiscal impact assessment of Second Home Owners (SHOs) in Greene County. To study this, the County employed a survey to answer the question, “What role do second home owners play in the County’s economy?” The purpose of the

survey and subsequent analysis was for the County to better understand and communicate the current and growing economic importance of second home owners to the county's economy. The survey was mailed to every SHO identified through the Real Property Tax Services database.

- The full report includes a summary from the survey results as well as an analysis of how annual spending creates new jobs, earnings, and sales for county businesses. The conclusion of the report provided recommendations about how county businesses can better serve the SHOs and increase their annual impact by offering new and different retail goods, providing a variety of amenities, and encouraging longer and more frequent visits. The Department is working with the County's Tourism and Business Advisory Committees on a detailed action plan.
- There are 8,200 second homes in Greene County representing 27% of all housing units in the county. Local spending by SHO's and their guests supports jobs and generated tax revenue. SHO spending power is equivalent to adding nearly 4,450 full-time residents. The total direct and indirect economic impact of the SHO's is \$147 million in total spending, over 3,400 jobs and 57.4 million dollars in earnings. The SHO's also have a fiscal impact in terms of annual property tax and sales tax revenue collected. Annual property tax collections for all jurisdictions totaled \$53.6 million and County sales tax revenue collections of \$3.4 million.
- **Craft Beverage Trail:** The Department has been instrumental in the creation of the Catskills Beverage Trail, which has now been officially designated by New York State. The Department also wrote a grant application in partnership with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce which was awarded \$38,000 for advertising and marketing funds for the Trail and its six member businesses. The Trail consists of five breweries, one winery and one tasting room, with potential additional members joining as the number of producers expands. The Great Northern Catskills of Greene County has also provided advertising and marketing for the Trail along with the match for the state grant.

PLANNING:

- **Greene County Planning Board (CPB):** The Department provided staff assistance to the CPB, including arranging for meetings and assisting in the review of Planning and Zoning Referrals from local municipalities. In 2016, the Department assisted with the review of 46 projects (down slightly from 48 projects reviewed in 2015). In addition, the Department hosted 2 training sessions for county and local planning boards, assisting with municipal training credits, including programs on: *Smart Growth, Sign Regulation, and Public Meetings and Hearings* on May 25, 2016 and *Hot Button Issues and Enforcement of Zoning and Other Laws* on October 24, 2016. The Department also coordinated the annual CPB Ellen Rettus Planning Achievement Awards with Northeast Treaters receiving recognition at the November meeting of the County Legislature in the Economic Development category for their recent modernization of their lumber treatment facility in Athens, which included a NYSDEC authorized clean-up under the NYS Brownfield program.

- **Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board – Annual Agricultural District Review:** The Department worked with the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and county and state agencies to facilitate the annual landowner inclusions to the Agricultural District. The statewide agricultural district program includes a combination of landowner incentives and protections, including protection against overly restrictive local laws, protection against private nuisance suits involving agricultural practices, protection against eminent domain takings, and preferential real property tax treatment (assessments based on agricultural value of land rather than commercial value). During the 2016 review 10.6 acres were added to the district, which now totals 39,582.38 acres. During the 2015 review 61.97 acres were added to the district and in 2014 933.72 acres were added.

- **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (Buyout) Program:** The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) provides funding by the federal government for the acquisition of properties that are located in flood-prone areas and demolition of flood-damaged structures thereon by local governments. FEMA reimbursed 75% of all eligible costs including pre-flood fair market value, appraisal, title report, survey, recording fees, boundary survey, environmental site assessment, demolition, and site restoration, with the remaining 25% accounted as the non-federal cost share, the responsibility either born by the Town and/or the landowner, or with special CDBG funds also provided by the State. NYS Office of Emergency Management is the contracting entity with FEMA and NYSOEM sub-contracts with Greene County. Greene County SWCD performed the day to day functions of the program. Twenty-three properties in eight towns across the county have closed and been demolished. The largest and most involved property was in Prattsville and closed on March 31, 2016 with demolition following in June of 2016. All properties have been restored to their natural floodplain state permanently removing any flood hazard. With FEMA approval, some towns will use the vacant parcels to develop small parks where feasible, others will be left fallow never to be developed. The Department is the signatory on the contracts and assists the SWCD with requests for proposals, procurement compliance and contractual requirements. The program is fully completed. For the NYC Watershed towns on the mountaintop, a new voluntary flood buyout program funded by NYCDEP is available for eligible landowners with municipal endorsement.

- **Broadband Support and Development:** The New NY Broadband Program, officially launched on January 8, 2016. The program guidelines envisioned three rounds of funding with the goal of providing broadband to every resident of the State by 2018. Since the launch of the program there have been two rounds of grant solicitation and two rounds of awards, one in 2016 and one in 2017. The third round is anticipated to be announced in the spring of 2017.

- On August 3, 2016, Round 1 awards were announced by Governor Cuomo in the City of Hudson, with officials from Columbia and Greene in attendance. Statewide, over \$51 million in grants were awarded to 14 broadband providers. Two Greene County broadband providers received almost \$10 million dollars, just over 19% of the statewide grant pool. State Telephone Company, received \$8.7 million, the second highest award in the State,

which will allow the company to expand into medium and rural density parts of the County with fiber to the home that it would otherwise not be able to afford. Coverages will be expanded to portions of Coxsackie and Athens with this grant award.

- Mid-Hudson Data Corporation received \$1 million dollars which will allow the company to expand service through fixed based, point-to-multi-point, wireless technology. Coverages will be expanded to portions of Prattsville, Ashland, Windham, Durham and Greenville.
- On February 28, 2017, Round 2 awards were announced for the Capital Region. Two Greene County broadband providers were awarded grants totaling \$2.6 million dollars. Mid-Hudson Data Corporation received almost \$200,000 to provide service to portions of Catskill and Cairo. Margaretville Telephone received \$2.5 million to provide service to portions of Lexington, Jewett and Halcott.
- Greene County continues to take an active approach to address the Unserved and Underserved households, businesses and institutions in the county. The Department continues to provide support to the local broadband providers, with assistance on mapping and data, grant writing services, interfacing with the NYS Broadband Office and general advocacy. The Department will continue to facilitate meetings of the Greene County Broadband Consortium, work with our State and Federal elected officials, communicate needs of the County to the State Broadband Office, and provide information to local elected officials and county residents.
- ***Catskill Creek Waterfront Walkway CFA:*** The Department is administering a \$600,000 grant from the NYS Department of State in partnership with the Village of Catskill to construct a waterfront trail along the Catskill Creek from the Uncle Sam Bridge to the Catskill Mountain Railway Bridge. The grant will be combined with \$200,000 from the Catskill–Olana Mitigation Fund, which has been dedicated for downtown and waterfront development in the Village of Catskill. The Village of Catskill has also agreed to contribute \$50,000 in grant funding in support of the project. The project is a catalyst for new development in the *Restaurant, Brewery and Performing Arts District*. In 2016, walkway construction documents were prepared, final surveying was completed, easements were signed and filed, an environmental review was conducted, and bids were released. Construction will begin in the spring of 2017 and be completed in the summer of 2017.
- ***New York State Open Space Plan/Advocacy for Tourism Based Recreation/Advocacy for Access and Safety Improvements at Kaaterskill Falls:*** The NYSDEC and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places work with regional advisory committees to prepare the NYS Open Space Plan. The plan is updated every three years and serves as the blueprint for the State's land conservation efforts and was last updated in 2014. The Department serves on the Region 4 Advisory Committee (Region 4 includes: Albany, Columbia, Delaware, Greene, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Schoharie Counties). In 2016, the Department worked with the Greene County Legislature on Resolution #276-16 recommending inclusion of Mountain Biking trails on Mount Hayden as part of the DEC review of the Elm Ridge Wild Forest Unit Management Plan.

- **Catskill Park Coalition and Advisory Committee:** The Catskill Park Advisory Committee was formed in 2015 by the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference in consultation with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The Committee is comprised of a group of local governments, institutions, not-for-profits, corporations, businesses and organizations that represent the various communities and users of the Catskill Park, the Catskill Watershed, and the NY State Forest. The purpose and mission of the Committee is to provide assistance, advice and guidance to the NYSDEC, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and other land managers. The Chairman of the Greene County Legislature appointed the Greene County Planning Director to represent Greene County on the Committee which meets monthly. There are a wide variety of topics and sub-committees that address issues regarding Unit Management Plans, stewardship resources, financial resources, legislative issues, state rules and regulations, research, and economic impacts.
- **Hudson River Skywalk:** In December of 2015, the Department secured \$124,250 in NYS DOS LWRP funding for a gateway and pedestrian improvement design for the Hudson River Skywalk (Phase 1). In 2016, the Department worked with the NYS Department of State to finalize the scope of services and contract for Phase I work. Phase 1 is now underway and will study ways to make a physical trail connection to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, strengthen the connection with the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Olana State Historic Site, and the Village of Catskill's historic downtown and waterfront. In addition, an economic impact analysis and market study will be completed to determine potential tourism visitation and revenue gains in promoting the birthplace of the Hudson River School of Art. In December of 2016, the Department secured an additional \$875,000 from the NYSDOS to construct the pedestrian connection between the west side of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, as well as safety improvements and three viewing platforms along the new walkway being constructed on the bridge. Phase 2 will also study and design a safe pedestrian connection from the east side of the bridge to the Olana State Historic Site. The project is being done in partnership with Thomas Cole, Olana, NYS Bridge Authority, Village of Catskill, Town of Greenport, Columbia County and Scenic Hudson.
- **Big Valley Trail Breakers Snowmobile Club:** In 2015 the Big Valley Trail Breakers Snowmobile Club (Club) asked Greene County to become the Local Sponsor of the Club under the NYS Snowmobile Grant Program. Participation of the county and the Club in the NYS Snowmobile Grant Program allows the Club to access funding for trail development and maintenance, currently around \$3,000. Greene County provides no direct funding; rather state grant funding for the program comes from NYS snowmobile registration fees. The funds are provided by the state to the Club, via the local sponsor per the terms of the program. The Big Valley Trail Breakers is organized as a Not-For-Profit 501(c)(3) with approximately 100 members. Their snowmobile trail goes through Halcott, Lexington, and Prattsville and connects to Delaware County in Roxbury allowing access to the NYS Trail Network. The program continued in 2016 with the Department facilitating contract renewal with the Trail Breakers, environmental review for trail modifications, and application to the NYS Snowmobile Grant Program for trail funding.

TOURISM:

▪ **Greene County Tourism Destination Marketing:** Greene County Tourism, as the County's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), along with our Agency of Record, Adworkshop, developed and executed an integrated marketing campaign that uses the latest industry tools to help advertise and market the county as a tourism destination. The DMO serves as a coordinating entity effectively bringing together tourism businesses and diverse community stakeholders to attract visitors. As the trends in tourism advertising continue to shift from traditional media to the use of public relations, digital media, social media engagement, and now story-telling and influencer marketing, Greene County Tourism continues to lead the way with an aggressive marketing plan, including:

- **Digital Marketing** (Website Content Updates, Organic Search, Search Engine Optimization, SEO/SEM, Pay-Per-Click Campaigns, Social Media, External E-blasts with growing database of people wanting more information on Greene County);
- **Paid Media** (Print Advertising, Radio, Summer & Winter TV, Broadcast Production including Storytelling Videos);
- **Public Relations** (Press Releases, Pitches, Placements, Travel Writers, Influencers, Targeted E-blasts, Internal Communications E-blasts with Tourism Businesses);
- **Marketing Collateral** (Travel Guide, Adventure Map, Beverage Logo & Rack Card, Motorcycle Guide, Dining Guide, Golf Brochure);
- **Consumer and Group Market Travel Shows;**
- **Participation in ILNY Tourism Regions** (Hudson Valley Tourism – HVT; Catskills – CATS; ILNY State Website).
 - Greene County Tourism executed three video shoots to create 'storytelling' videos that showcase Family Resorts, Outdoor Adventure, and Winter Sports. Each video featured a single, unlikely character that told the story of what it's like to be a Greene County traveler having the time of their lives. Each video uniquely captured the emotion and landscape of the region, telling a story that is both familiar and new.
 - With the combination of webpage optimization, via authoritative content and SEO (search engine optimization) press releases, visits to www.greatnortherncatskills.com increased by 7.8% (480,054 vs 305,764).
 - Public relations and direct marketing in 2016 reached over 1,100 industry contacts that resulted in 231 placements and approximately 800 visitors to our

website. This year we focused on influencer marketers who visited Greene County and shared their experience via social media platforms. Such influencers include, Escape Brooklyn, Noelle Downing, and Leticia Cline.

- Greene County Tourism, in partnership with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce, held the 2016 Orville Slutzky Tourism Seminar in May at The Fireside Lounge at Thunderhart Golf Course where about 80 local businesses learned about the county's Destination Marketing Programs. They also had an opportunity to learn about Social Media from our agency of record, AdWorkshop and how they can market to millennials. The entire event was followed with a business after hours sponsored by the Greene County Chamber of Commerce.
- Attending shows is an important method to showcase Greene County as a four season destination, to distribute travel guides, and capture names for the database. In 2016, GC Tourism attended or partnered with Greene County businesses or the ILNY CATS Region to attend 21 travel shows (consumer, motor coach/group business) where over 5,000 qualified names were captured and added to our email database.
- In 2016 Greene County was a participant in New York Welcomes You, Mobile Visitor Center Road Show. This allowed Greene County to be 1 of 17 areas promoted at 15 events and shows, throughout the northeast, where over 500,000 potential visitors attended. New this year, Greene County was a featured placement on the branded vehicle that travelled over 100,000 miles throughout the Northeast.
- Marketing support was provided to events and festivals throughout Greene County via paid media, website, social media, press releases, etc. The Tourism Office provided logistical support for over 10 events/races, such as, coordination of support meetings with municipality/agency connections, volunteer recruitment, and liaison support with the event promoters. The Department spent additional time in 2016 working with Townsquare media on the Mass Gathering Permits for Taste of Country and Mountain Jam. The Department has also been working with the promoter of the Greyfox Festival on cellular and broadband connectivity at the festival.
- The Historic Catskill Point has seen an increase in traffic as well as revenue. There were nine visits from vessels and cruise lines, thirty events, including weddings, and three bass tournaments that took place at the Point which generated about \$50,000 in revenue, similar to 2015 sales. The Point continues to be booked consistently each year. The Tourism Office oversees all public events at the Historic Catskill Point.
- **Tourism Advisory Committee:** The Greene County Legislature continues to support the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC), which is comprised of 10 Tourism businesses and organizations. The TAC continues to build industry support and awareness, and provides

industry specific input on advertising and marketing. In 2016, all 10 members of the Committee were reappointed. The TAC met on a monthly basis, assisted the Department in the development of the 2016 Destination Advertising and Marketing Campaign and the TAC Priority Action Plan. Extensive performance based reporting is provided to the TAC and the Legislature in the form of bi-weekly public relations reports and Google analytics, a bi-annual report, and an end of year report.

▪ **TAC Priority Action Plan:** The Tourism Advisory Committee endorsed a Priority Action Plan, which was developed to enhance specific campaigns, as follows:

- New focus for 2016 was on Digital Marketing, specifically social media and search marketing. Adworkshop took over the Great Northern Catskills Facebook and Instagram social media channels which resulted in a 40% increase and 58% increase in followers, respectively.
- Mobile Tour promotion brought more awareness to all the adventurous things there are to do in County. Greene County ambassadors attended over 10 major events where they encouraged visitors to return.
- A continued investment in funds for Broadcast TV drove more families to stay in the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County to enjoy a real mountain adventure with lots of attractions, events and lodging choices.

▪ **Regional Tourism Partnerships:** Greene County Tourism is designated by the Greene County Legislature as the Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA) for participation in the ILNY Regional Matching Funds Program. Greene County is a participating member of the ILNY Hudson Valley Travel Region found at www.travelhudsonvalley.com and is officially designated by ILNY as part of the Catskill Travel Region, represented by Catskill Area Tourism Services (CATS) through www.visitthecatkills.com. CATS is a Regional Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) representing the four counties that comprise the region. CATS uses matching funds from the counties and ILNY to implement an annual marketing campaign inclusive of public relations, traditional and digital media, regional travel shows, and legislative action.

- In partnership with ILNY, the CATS region received additional funding to promote the Catskill Region in the fall through Native Advertising and Social Influencers. Both campaigns were very successful and generated website and social media traffic.
- The Native Campaign included partnering with Thrillist, leading men's digital lifestyle brands, and featured 5 articles on their site. The campaign generated over 1,800 sessions, of which 83.89% were new to the site, and resulted in 32 requests for travel guides.

- The Social Influencer included partnering with Beautiful Destinations, an award-winning creative agency behind the largest travel community on social media. The campaign included video and photo content that was featured on Facebook and Instagram across three channels (ILNY, Visit the Catskills, and Beautiful Destinations) that generated over 49 million impressions.

- **Capital Region Economic Development Council (CFA) – CATS Tourism Grant:** Catskill Area Tourism Services (CATS) has been awarded a grant from the ILNY, Empire State Development, Market New York Program, in the amount of \$270,000 for the Catskill travel region to execute an advertising campaign focusing on outdoor recreation, attractions and events. CATS and Focus Media, former agency of record, prepared and submitted the application on behalf of CATS. Greene County is one of the counties in the region that will benefit from the grant. In 2014 CATS developed an RFP to secure an agency of record, where Adworkshop was awarded the bid. The grant was executed in 2015 and 2016 with funds used to develop a new brand and supporting strategy, adaptive website and an integrated destination marketing plan; as well as the Ride the Catskills campaign and landing page platform (to be executed in 2017).
 - With the addition of new content on www.visitthecatsskills.com, total referrals to www.greatnortherncatskills.com increased over 50% versus a year ago.
 - In addition to the new content, the grant provided funding for a marketing campaign which resulted in over 87,000 likes / views of various social media platforms and a total digital marketing impression of over 154,900.

- **Regional Roundtable Host (CATS):** In April of 2016 Greene County attended the annual CATS Legislative Roundtable Discussion which was held in Ulster County at Honor’s Haven Resort. This meeting provided an opportunity to advocate on behalf of tourism before state lawmakers and regulatory agencies. Topics discussed included tourism funding with regards to the ILNY Matching Funds and the Regional Economic Development Council, minimum wage increase, the New NY Broadband Initiative, and the growing usage of Airbnb as a booking tool in the growing sharing economy..

- **Economic Impact of Tourism in the Catskills:** The 2015 Economic Impact Study was prepared by Tourism Economics for ILNY. The report highlights key economic trends and data for the State and then does a region by region breakdown. For the Catskills Travel region a few PowerPoint slides were of significance:
 - Tourism in the Catskills is a \$1.2 billion industry, an increase of 3.8% versus 2014. (The ILNY Report for 2016 is typically available in summer of 2017)

- 15.3% of all employment in the Catskills region is generated by tourism, where Greene County is the most dependent with 22% of all employment sustained by visitors.
- Tourism in the Catskills generated nearly \$144 million in state and local taxes in 2015.
- Sales, property, and hotel bed taxes contributed \$79 million in local taxes.
- Were it not for tourism-generated state and local taxes, the average household in the region would have to pay an additional \$1,036 to maintain the same level of government revenue; Greene County is \$983.
- **Mountain Bike Adventure Trails and Ride Center CFA Grant:** In December of 2016, the Department was awarded a \$100K Capital Region CFA Grant under the Market New York program. The CFA was designed to showcase Greene County as the Capital District's ride center for mountain bike enthusiasts. It includes an aggressive advertising and marketing campaign with the goal of attracting additional riders from the NY Metro Area that would typically select Vermont (Milestone Trail System and Kingdom Trails) for a recreational mountain biking experience. The Greene County trail locations will include: Windham Mountain Bike Park, Windham Path, Roundtopia Trail System, Elm Ridge State Forest, Huckleberry Trail, and in the future Mt. Hayden. The new advertising and marketing, including the new landing page will be launched in the spring of 2017.
- **Tourism Legislative Initiatives:** In 2016, the Department worked with the Greene County Legislature on Resolution #130-16 in support of Senate and Assembly Bills to amend the NYS Tax Law and NYS Film Tax Credit Program. The NYS Film Tax Credit Program provides incentives to qualified production companies with certain production associated costs eligible for tax credits. The legislation was enacted into law to include Greene County as one of 12 upstate counties to receive the additional 10% production and post production tax credits putting the county on par with downstate.

TRANSPORTATION:

- **Greene County Transit System:** The Department administers the county's public transportation system in coordination with the Department of Human Services. Greene County has a continuing agreement with the NYS Department of Transportation for funding to operate Greene County Transit. These funds are made available to the County through the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and administered by the NYSDOT, as formula grants for rural areas (Section 5311 Program). The Section 5311 program provides funds to the County for operation, capital assistance and mobility management. On June 1st of 2016, the County contracted with Ulster-Greene ARC to operate the Greene County Transit System for service as a public mass transit route deviation system, meaning it operates on defined fixed routes but will deviate from the fixed route on a limited basis with prior

notification. Funds from the FTA provide subsidies for operational costs, including a mobility manager, and costs for the acquisition of capital expenditures, such as buses. In 2016, the County was awarded funds to acquire two additional buses. The FTA funds are supplemented with funds from the County and the ARC through a cost share formula. The ARC provides a turn-key operation for the County and is responsible for the daily operations of the Transit System. The mobility manager, dispatcher, bus drivers, and administrative staff funded through this program are employees of the ARC. The County and the ARC are currently preparing the annual 2017-2018 Consolidated Funding Application. It is anticipated that the County will be eligible for \$367,000 of FTA funding through this program.

- First Student operated the Greene County Transit System from January 1 through May 31st, 2016. The bus had one route daily, providing service to different areas of the county, running from 9–5 while circulating a mid-day shuttle in the Village of Catskill. The majority of riders were senior citizens, however, it also serves the general fare-paying public. The ARC began operation June 1st, running through December 31st, 2016. Both operated under a third party contract. The Arc increased the number of routes to five each day in addition to running two additional routes once a week to serve the mountaintop. The shuttle service was expanded under The ARC, now offering three midday shuttle runs. In 2015 the transit bus provided a total of 5,098 rides. In 2016, as the public learned about the new routes, the ridership increased to 8,513 rides. The general public ridership increased by 1,000 rides during this period to 6,054. The ARC also provided 2,459 rides to the ARC clients during this same period.

CAPITAL PROJECTS, REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS, COUNTY WEBSITE:

- ***Greene County Government Website:*** The Greene County Government website redesign was launched in March of 2016 www.greenegovernment.com. The website upgrade enabled us to develop a mobile adaptive-responsive site, improved user experience, and provided a more user friendly engagement to access county departments and agencies information. The website saw an overall increase of more than 11%. Mobil device usage increased significantly, up 52% from the previous year. The upgraded website provided a viable and highly usable platform to engage residents and the public. The Department oversees the website contract, and works closely on the content management strategy and communications calendar with KathodeRay Media, the County's Advertising and Marketing Agency for both the County Website and the Buy/Invest in Greene Business Attraction program.
- ***New Greene County Jail:*** The Department worked with the County Administrator, County Attorney and Delaware Engineering in preparation of Requests for Qualifications and the Conduct of the Environmental review for the new Greene County Jail:
 - ***Jail Website Landing Page:*** The Department worked with KathodeRay Media to create a website landing page accessible at <http://greenegovernment.com/greene-government/proposed-jail-project>, where information on the Population Projections, Jail

Bed Space Requirements, News Articles, Environmental Documentation, and Jail Task Force Committee information is provided.

- ***Request for Qualifications (RFQ):*** The Department prepared the RFQ for the Construction Management Services for the New Greene County Jail and distributed the RFQ for solicitations, per Resolution #2189, and submitted the responses to the Jail Task Force Committee.
- ***Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA):*** The Department worked with Delaware Engineering in the preparation, submission and notification of the conduct of SEQRA for the New Greene County Jail which included a full Environmental Impact Statement:
 - At the April meeting of the GC Legislature, Resolution #2192-16 was adopted Declaring Notice of Intent to Declare Lead Agency Status; At the May meeting of the GC Legislature, Resolution #2261-16 was adopted Declaring Lead Agency and the Issuance of the Positive Declaration; At the September meeting of the GC Legislature, Resolution #2390-16 was adopted for the Adoption of Complete Draft Environmental Impact Statement and also setting the public comment period and scheduling the public hearing; At the December meeting of the GC Legislature, Resolution #2550-16 was adopted for the Adoption of the Complete Final Environmental Impact Statement; and at the January meeting of the GC Legislature, Resolution # 2596-17 was adopted concluding the process with the Adoption of the Environmental Impact Statement Findings.
- ***Request for Proposals (RFP), Insurance Brokerage Services:*** The Department prepared an RFP for Insurance Brokerage Services for the County and distributed the RFP for solicitations in July of 2016, per Resolution #2321-16. Solicitations were received in August and provided to the County Administrator.
- ***Emergency Services Radio Communications Towers:*** The Department worked with Delaware Engineering in the preparation, submission and notification of the conduct of SEQRA for the Emergency Services Telecommunications Facility on Hunter Mountain. At the April meeting of the GC Legislature, Resolution #2193-16 was adopted issuing a Determination of Significance as a Negative Declaration. As part of the SEQRA process, the Town of Hunter resolved that the County was exempt from local land use regulations utilizing the prescribed ten point balancing test.

PERSONNEL:

- ***Staffing:*** The Department has ten full time employees and two per diem employees. The staffing level for the Department has not changed since 2013. The Department has 181 years of collective experience, with two retirements planned for 2017.

- **Economic Development:**
 - Director (Warren Hart, 15 Years, Management)
 - Community Development Specialist (Karl Heck, 13 Years, Management)
 - Economic Development Specialist (Frank Alguire, 11 Years, Management)
 - Business Marketing Coordinator (Teri Weiss, 30 Years, CSEA Local 820)

- **Planning:**
 - Principal Planner (Ed Diamante, 30 Years, CSEA Local 820)

- **Tourism:**
 - Tourism Marketing Manager (Heather Bagshaw, 4 Years, Management)
 - Sr. Marketing and Sales Coordinator (Nancy Petramale, 25 Years, CSEA Local 820)
 - Marketing and Sales Coordinator (Patty Austin, 9 Years, CSEA Local 820)

- **Administrative:**
 - Grant Coordinator/Budget (Margaret Bagshaw, 22 Years, CSEA Local 820)
 - Administrative Assistant (Dana Masselli, 14 Years, CSEA Local 820)

- **Per Diem:**
 - Tourism Aide (Vacant, Catskill Point, Seasonal)
 - Tourism Aide (Mary McGrath, 8 Years, Visitor Center, Weekends)