

2016 Legislative

Roundtable Reception

LAKE PLACID

Thursday, March 24, 2016

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

High Peaks Resort

co-sponsored by:



Lake Placid Legislative Roundtable

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High Peaks Resort

2384 Saranac Avenue, Lake Placid, NY

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Program

5:30 p.m.

Registration & Reception

6:15 - 7:00 p.m.

Welcome:

Introduction of State & Local Leaders

Presentation of State Issues

Jan Marie Chesterton, President, NYS Hospitality & Tourism Association

Presentation of Local Issues

James McKenna, CEO, Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism

Roundtable Discussion with State and Local Elected Officials

Sponsors



New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association

The New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association (NYSH&TA) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing nearly 1,000 lodging properties, totaling over 122,000 guest rooms, or 70% of total guest room inventory in the state. NYSH&TA's membership is also comprised of approximately 50 parks and attractions, over 100 industry suppliers, and more than 100 cooperating organizations, tourism educators, students and individuals combined. Founded in Saratoga Springs in 1887, NYSH&TA's mission is to lead and protect the New York State hospitality and tourism industry by providing advocacy, education, and resources. The Association provides: **representation and advocacy** on behalf of the industry before state lawmakers and regulatory agencies; **resources** in the form of money-saving programs, networking opportunities and marketing exposure via the website; **educational offerings** that help members best serve their customers.

Illegal Hotels – Leveling the Playing Field

The short-term online rental market—in which individuals rent out rooms, apartments, or entire homes to overnight guests,—poses a threat to consumers, neighborhoods and businesses. In response to the growing trend of companies, like Airbnb, promoting illegal owner-occupied hotels within the state, the state's lodging industry is looking to provide a statutory solution in New York to limit and potentially prohibit their impact on the legal hospitality industry.

NYSH&TA suggests reasonable changes or modifications should be made to existing laws or implemented independently, because travelers and communities deserve the proper safeguards that protect them from the potential dangers and risks posed by the short-term online industry. NYSH&TA continues to work with government to develop legislation that would combat these unregulated short-term rentals within New York by requiring compliance with state and local hotel laws. Last fall, in conjunction with the Senate, NYSH&TA held a series of informal roundtables to gather information from the industry on ideas, thoughts and solutions as to best address and advance state legislation during the 2016 Legislative Session.

In 2010, the State Legislature enacted stricter fire safety standards for Class B or transient use dwellings for hotels only in New York City. NYSH&TA continues to support not only the New York City hotels, but the City of New York in both its efforts to enforce the law and its efforts to eliminate illegal hotels while doing so practically, allowing well-established legal hotels to convert their certificates of occupancy and remain in compliance.

Minimum Wage

In his 2016-2017 State Budget, Governor Cuomo has proposed a statewide minimum wage increase of \$15 per hour by 2018 in NYC and by 2021 for the rest of the state. In New York State, if the minimum wage is raised, the law requires that a wage board be called regarding the minimum wage of food service workers. Therefore, if an increase in the statewide minimum wage happens this year, a wage board will be called for food service workers. NYSH&TA supports the New York State Restaurant Association's (NYSRA) efforts to obtain a "5-year freeze" on any new wage board being called if the statewide minimum wage is raised. While as an industry we support a fair minimum wage, it is important to note that such increases negatively impact job creation and expansion of business across the state.

The federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25 per hour, and the minimum wage in New York is currently \$9.00 per hour. In 2015, two separate wage boards convened by the Governor and approved by then Acting Labor

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Commissioner Mario Musolino approved minimum wage increases for tipped wage workers (\$7.50 per hour), and to \$15 per hour the minimum wage for fast food workers by 2018 (NYC), and 2021 (NYS).

As of 1/1/2016, the minimum wage for all tipped workers is now \$7.50 per hour, and the minimum wage for fast food workers is \$9.75 per hour statewide and \$10.50 per hour in New York City.

Tourism Funding

Given its proven track record as a revenue source for state and local governments, and as a job generator, Tourism is not only a wise investment, but a critical one that yields unmatched and well sustained returns for New York's economy. To that end, The Governor has called for an unprecedented \$50M be spent on tourism promotion in the coming year. Additionally, the 2016-2017 Executive Budget, appropriates the following direct spending for tourism:

Tourism Matching Grants:	\$3.815M (-\$500K from Enacted Budget Last Year)
I Love NY:	\$2.5M
Market NY:	\$5M
Taste NY:	\$1.1M
Welcome Centers (Binghamton and Beekmantown):	\$196K (each)

These funding mechanisms from the Governor and Legislature are critical, so that the industry, along with its State and local partners, continues to flourish.

The tourism industry will be asking Legislature to fund the Tourism Matching Grants Program at \$5 million, a funding level not realized since 2008-2009.

Paid Family Leave

The Governor's Executive Budget contains a proposal for 12 weeks of job-protected, employee-funded leave to be used for bonding with a new child or caring for a sick relative. NYSH&TA remains concerned that a proposal mandating paid family leave would encourage absence from the workplace, and will more than likely cause mandatory overtime for other employees. Additionally, many New York State employers already provide paid family leave and incur substantial expenses in doing so, but are not bound by the terms of any mandates or statutes.

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Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism

The Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism/Lake Placid CVB is a 501c6 not-for-profit corporation. ROOST is the accredited Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Essex, Franklin, and Hamilton counties in New York and is contracted with Essex County, Hamilton County, Franklin County, Town of North Elba, Village of Lake Placid, Town of Harrietstown, Village of Saranac Lake, Town of Tupper Lake, Village of Tupper Lake, and Town of Piercefield. ROOST also contracts with the Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce, Whiteface Mountain Regional Visitors Bureau, Schroon Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Ticonderoga Area Chamber of Commerce.

ROOST has continuously evolved to stay ahead of the changing destination marketplace. Our Destination Marketing focus is based in traditional advertising, digital marketing, public relations, and by harnessing the power of electronic media. In-house staff manage all facets of our tourism marketing initiatives for the 10 website regions served including website production, photography, content development and search engine optimization.

Additionally, we service our regions with destination development planning strategies and a hands on approach to foster and promote growth. We provide small business marketing education and assistance out of a main office in Lake Placid, and staff visitors centers in Crown Point, Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake.

Tourism Infrastructure

In order to effectively use tourism as an economic driver that keeps our rural communities sustainable, the proper tourism infrastructure must be in place.

I. Lodging: The Adirondacks have seen some success in this area with the building of a few new and renovated lodging facilities in key destination locations, but programs are needed to continue to add lodging rooms with up-to-date amenities that will attract visitors.

II. Cycling: Long-range DOT planning for cycling routes on roadways throughout the Adirondacks is also a significant infrastructure priority. With scenic vistas and rural roadways, the Adirondacks are well-placed to become a premier cycling destination. Cycling is a growth market, as health travel has been trending in recent years, and active families and recent retirees are looking for places with cycling infrastructure that connects communities and has the relevant appropriate amenities. Forest Preserve issues come into play with cycling routes.

Adding regular bicycle cars to Amtrak trains would further encourage cycling in the region.

III. Rail: Higher-speed rail between Albany and Montreal will help draw people to the Adirondacks. The local stops in Westport, Port Henry and Ticonderoga are significant connections for the Adirondack region, with a shuttle extending to the Adirondacks. Improvements to the Adirondack line would help develop the Lake Champlain Region as a destination as well as help increase traffic to the Adirondacks.

Oil tank rail cars carried through the Adirondacks pose a threat to the flora and fauna of our forests and waterways, which are the greatest asset the area has to increase tourism. An ill-timed accident could have disastrous effects for tourism on Lake Champlain.

IV. Air: Continue to support Adirondack Regional Airport in Lake Clear and recognize the strong role it plays in air access to the Adirondack Park. Work with the North Country Chamber of Commerce to support the advancement of Plattsburgh's airport as an important national/international commercial hub.

Cellular and Broadband Coverage

There have been great strides in cell service coverage throughout the Adirondack Park, but plenty of areas still exist that have weak or no cell service. The state has committed several rounds of funding to improving broadband Internet connections throughout the Park, and work is now underway, but there are still areas in need.

Canadian Welcome Signs

Canada represents a significant market to draw visitors, and French-speaking Quebec is the closest market to much of the country. DOT-placed signs with both French and English welcoming visitors would help encourage Quebec travelers and make them feel more at home.

I Love NY Marketing, Tourism Matching Funds, Market NY

I Love NY, Tourism Matching Grants, and Market New York programs have been important to developing tourism destinations throughout the Adirondacks.

Agritourism

One of the biggest hurdles for agritourism is understanding what it is. The term covers everything from aesthetic, bucolic pastures with animals grazing and red barns as tourists drive through rural areas to farmers markets, direct-to-consumer sales and added-value products at farm stands like Meier's Artisan Cheese Curd in Fort Covington, to touring large production facilities like McCadam Cheese Plant. It's also wine tasting and visiting breweries. As the local food movement intensifies, tourists are redirecting their destinations to include agritourism and young farmers are starting their own farms.

Any and all legislation which allows, expands, permits growth in this segment of tourism helps keep farming alive and growing in the North Country.

Border Crossings

Continue to work with representatives in Washington, as well as the North Country Chamber of Commerce and Quebec, on increasing the freedom of flow of residents back and forth over the border.



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