



TOURISM NICHE MARKETING STRATEGIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Niche Market Development	5
Identified Niches	8
Niche Market Target Audiences	11
Strategies and Tactics	19
Business Opportunities	25
Additional Resources	31

CAYUGA COUNTY TOURISM NICHE MARKETING TOOLKIT INTRODUCTION

Noonmark Group was retained to explore the following areas as they pertain to the Cayuga County tourism industry's marketing efforts:

- Analysis of current tourism partner marketing strategies and their alignment with tourism research already completed by Cayuga County.
- Identification of opportunities available for Cayuga County Tourism partners based on review of asset analysis.
- Development of a niche/segment marketing toolkit for up to five niches/segments for use by Cayuga County Tourism partners.

To gather data for this study, Noonmark Group conducted interviews with representative businesses and organizations in the private and public sector operating in Cayuga County, including lodging properties, parks and recreation organizations, wineries, arts organizations, restaurants, museums, economic development organizations and government officials.

Noonmark Group also reviewed the Young Strategies Study, conducted in 2011 for the Cayuga County Office of Tourism, Cayuga County Tourism marketing plans and collateral, as well as the web sites related to the tourism industry in the area.

Review of the tourism research study conducted for Cayuga County Tourism by Young Strategies in 2011 identifies the major purposes of overnight travel to the region as leisure visits (41%) focused on general relaxation, winery visits, family and friend visits, as well as shopping and romantic getaways. The other major segments were business (33%) and conference/group (23%). In addition, the results implied that the beautiful scenery, wineries and lakes were the resources most enjoyed by guests, with similar quality scores. The study also measured the satisfaction level of visitors with the attractions of the region, and found a high satisfaction level in the segments identified above.

The Young study also suggested that the summer season is already adequately promoted and that an emphasis should be placed on the shoulder seasons if possible. This suggestion was reinforced during recent visits with tourism stakeholders. Most feel that the wine trails are well promoted, but that the wine product may not be differentiated enough based on quality and availability of the numerous types of wine varieties.



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The concept of cross-promoting attractions and multiple venues was a common suggestion amongst those interviewed. Informing potential visitors of other area activities and attractions from each attraction's proprietary website would also prove beneficial. A review of various stakeholder websites revealed that while a number of the websites did cross-promote the region, a majority could potentially participate more in this area. The larger hotel properties and the performing arts organizations provided the most cross-market promotion. The utilization and implementation of the niche market tool kits provided could enhance this connectivity more among businesses that lag the cross-marketing leaders.

The Young Strategies Study referred to in this introduction and throughout this toolkit can be found online at:

<http://tourcayuga.com/assets/Uploads/Documents/Cayuga-2011-Travel-Market-Research-Data.pdf>

NICHE MARKET TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Niche tourism products are experiences designed to satisfy specific groups of people rather than the mass market. Experiences are shaped around a common theme, place, or product. Examples of niche tourism experiences include an outdoor activity such as hiking, a culinary activity such as visiting a winery, or an event activity such as visiting an antique car show. These activities match specific interests of a specific group of people. When developing niche tourism experiences, the designer must be sure that the market is large enough to generate necessary revenues, that the experience is accessible to the specific market, and that the specific market can afford the experience.

Two strategies can be employed to attract customers to a niche tourism experience. The two strategies are Market Development and Market Penetration.

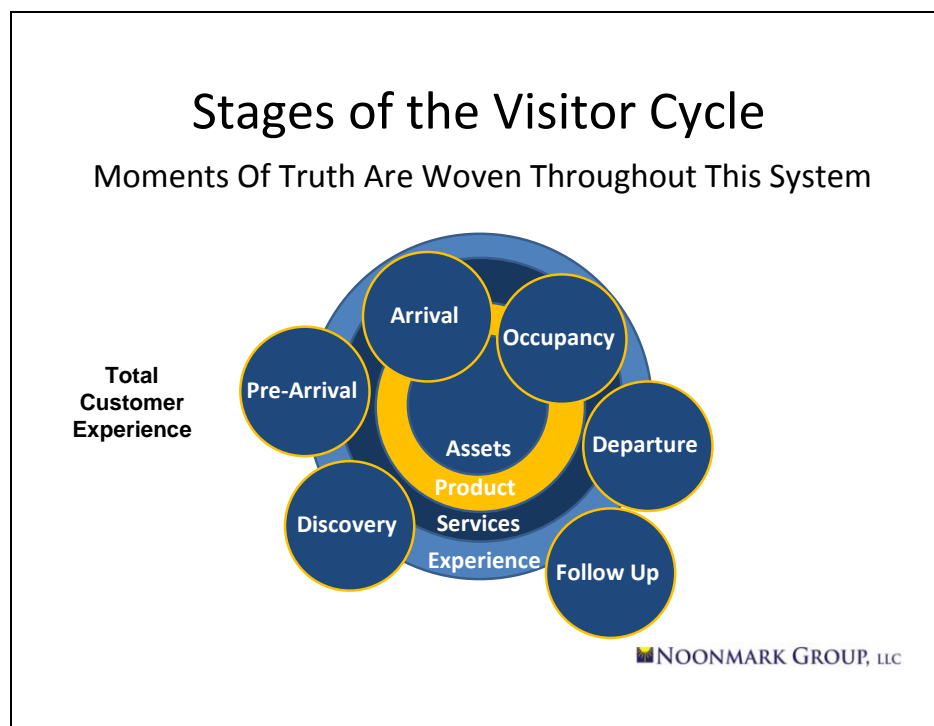
Market Development – This is a strategy whereby the business or destination targets a niche audience that has not engaged in the visitor experience in the past. Market development means attracting new types of people to the destination or experience. Market Development strategy would include new business development.

Market Penetration – Market penetration is a strategy that strives to attract people similar to those who are already visiting the destination or participating in the niche tourism experience. This may include a shoulder season strategy that capitalizes off peak visitor exposure during the summer. Market penetration is a strategy to generate repeat visitation and to generate business from the market currently consuming travel products and services. When engaging in the market penetration strategy, individual enterprises should focus messaging efforts on the primary attraction, and partner with secondary attractions and providers of supporting activities through the seasons in order to maximize visitation throughout the year.

The tactics for generating new business using these strategies are sometimes similar but are also often different. For example, market development requires sending messages to a new type of customer who may gather information differently than the customer commonly targeted by a business or the destination. An older audience that has been visiting a region for decades may respond to a magazine advertisement with a 20% off coupon, for example, while a younger audience may respond to an Internet advertisement or a special deal on Groupon.com.

Understanding The Stages Of The Visitor Cycle

Maintaining consistent quality throughout the visitor experience is essential to the success of a tourism business. Ensuring consistent quality is extra challenging when partnerships are formed and packaged experiences are available for visitors to purchase. The stages of the visitor cycle are presented in the model in the graphic below. These stages provide the business owner or manager a methodology to ascertain the steps in the service process for each stage based on the visitor expectations and requirements during each stage.



Tourism consists of an interlocking variety of organizations which, when the total experience is combined, result in a satisfying visitor experience. Complementary organizations may include lodging properties, restaurants, outfitters and guide services, transportation systems, special places, artisan shops, and entertainment venues. This grouping of organizations within a destination becomes a tourism network.

To succeed as a network, each component organization must be enthusiastic about participating. Visitor centered networks succeed when all participating organizations and their associates are fully engaged in the delivery process. Foundation stones of success include well designed interpretive programs that tell

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an authentic and engaging story, welcoming visitor-oriented facilities, information placards, and tastefully designed and well maintained access roads, parking areas, and entrance ways.

Every associate of each enterprise in the network should be knowledgeable and trained to provide accurate and detailed information about the area. Ideally, at least once a year, associates of each organization within the network should experience the other members of the network and visit the special places participating in the network.

IDENTIFIED NICHEs FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Based on the research conducted, niches that tourism industry partners should consider include:



Nature-Based Tourism

- Activities: Birding, walking, wildlife viewing
- Assets: State Parks, refuges, lakes



Outdoor Adventure

- Activities: Kayaking, canoeing, cycling
- Assets: State parks, lakes, scenic roads



Agritourism and Culinary Experiences

- Activities: Farm visits, tastings, specialty food tours, meals
- Assets: Farms, restaurants, specialty culinary trails



Arts and Performances

- Activities: Theaters, galleries, concerts
- Assets: Theaters, performing arts venues, arts districts



Cultural Heritage and History

- Activities: Museum visits, historical tours
- Assets: Museums, historic sites

Niche: Nature-Based Tourism and Outdoor Adventures

Target Audience: Active nature-based visitors

The nature-based tourism and outdoor adventure activities most frequently mentioned in the research included biking, hiking, paddling, boating and birding. Targeting these segments will help support and build upon the county and regional thematic trail and promotional efforts around biking and birding. Developing the



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possible access points for water use was also an opportunity frequently identified in interviews with stakeholders. Canoeing, kayaking and paddle boating are all viable options for businesses to consider within the region, and are less difficult and costly to offer than motorboat options. These water-based activities, and the types of travelers that would be inclined to enjoy these activities, are also compatible with the hiking/walking and cycling markets. Emerson Park, Montezuma Refuge and Sterling Nature Center are wonderful natural assets that certainly can be the possible hub of quality bird watching ventures.

The quality ranking of the outdoor amenities in the recent Young study reveal the high level of satisfaction that visitors have with the region when it comes to the wine industry and outdoor activities in general. This supports the concept of further developing niche markets that target these great natural resources by individual businesses.

Niche: Agritourism and Culinary Experiences

Target Audiences: Visiting Family and Friends, Cultural Creatives, Foodies

Farm-to-table, specialty food and agritourism experiences present a strong opportunity for expanded growth and cross-promotion for Cayuga County tourism businesses. This potential market segment aligns very well with the farm-to-table program already in place in the county. Agritourism experiences, food-related packages and cross-promotional efforts could also be developed in conjunction with the already established Sweet and Cheese trail programs offered by the Cayuga County Tourism program. For assets that have agritourism potential, making minor capital improvements on their property may create a “festival” like environment for families and groups to enjoy. In a recent national news story, the value of agritourism ventures on existing farms was highlighted. From pig races to a corn maze to tractor rides, these 23,000 farmers reported generating over a half billion dollars in excess revenue from agritourism. Implementation of this concept would require some investment in resources to encourage farmers to consider this concept as a viable means to generate additional revenue. Restaurants can also benefit from the agritourism/culinary assets of the destination by partnering to source and co-promote local foods.

These culinary and farm-to-table experiences align well with the Young Strategies study, with 31% responding that a culinary/wine school would be an appealing addition to the asset mix for Cayuga County.

Niche: Arts and Performances

Target Audiences: Visiting Family and Friends, Cultural Creatives

The theatre and arts segment is another opportunity for the region's businesses to explore for growth potential. Concurrent with the Young Strategies study findings and recent stakeholder interviews, this market has noticeable and increasing potential. According to the Young Strategies study, 47% of the respondents would find "Public Displays of Art" appealing, while 37% would enjoy a "Summer Long Theatre Festival." The level of variety and venue sophistication allows the area to explore this market with the ability to differentiate the area from other regional arts competition. The new performing arts center, which should open in 2015, will further enhance the opportunities available for promotion. The active campaign to develop the Arts District of Auburn is another initiative that speaks to this strong county asset.

Niche: Cultural Heritage and History

Target Audiences: Visiting Family and Friends, Cultural Creatives

With several notable historical attractions, the prospects of further product development and cross-promotion of the cultural heritage and history assets would be a sound approach. In particular, when weather is a factor, these venues still can provide an enjoyable visitor experience. With 17 historic venues and attractions listed on the tourcayuga.com website, as well as the positioning of Auburn as "History's Hometown" there is an ample asset base to build packaging and cross-promotion among these entities and with area partners. An example of the collaboration possible is the Saratoga NY Museums Pass – a collection of museums that are working in collaboration to cross-promote each other. The program is in its fifth year and remains viable.

NICHE MARKET TARGET AUDIENCES

Niche marketing requires clear articulation of target audiences. Clarity will reveal the travel requirements of the niche market, and how to reach the niche market, once they are identified. The five themes described in this document are designed for specific market segments, which fit into these categories below with some crossover.

Active Nature-Based Market

Characteristics:

- Age range – mid-twenties to late seventies
- Mind set- curious, thoughtful, appreciative, reflective
- Tastes – local flavors, rustic, quality, views,
- Social choices – couples, singles, friends, close bonding, loyalty
- Hangouts – upscale night clubs, fitness centers, health clubs, brew pubs, wine bars
- Careers – wide range - from bike shops to law firms, educators to carpenters
- Residence – urban, rural, college towns, growing small cities
- Buying patterns – Quality and durability, new features and benefits, local outfitter

How to Sell to the Active Nature-Based Market:

- Focus offerings on active and health-oriented activities designed around weekend travel or short vacations.
- Offerings should focus primarily on outdoor activities as this market is made up of nature lovers.
- This audience strives to be environmentally responsible so that should be factored into plans for development of offerings for this market.
- Packages and activities should have contemporary cuisine included or available, featuring local and in-season ingredients.
- Though this segment has discretionary income to spend, they are careful with how they spend. Quality is more valuable to them than quantity.
- Authentic experiences are a must.



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- People in this segment are somewhat adventurous but don't necessarily require extreme challenges.
- For lodging, comfortable accommodations and even a well-organized camping area are sufficient.
- This segment is physically fit and welcomes participation in active multisport activities such as hiking, biking, and kayaking. This group might also enjoy getting out on a motorized boat or sailing vessel to experience open waters.
- Develop opportunities that focus on learning while doing, rather than passive activities.
- The older portion of this segment might enjoy sightseeing by car and stopping at unique and authentic sites where experiences are personal and the service culture is welcoming.
- This niche segment prefers an integrated vacation experience where a number of activities and types of experiences are mixed into the daily itinerary.
- Opportunities for exercise are important on a daily basis for this group.
- The active traveler doesn't go by labels such as ecotourist, agrotourist, adventure traveler, or cycling enthusiast - they choose vacation experiences based on specific activities such as kayaking, hiking, or cycling, as well as the availability of traditional or local music, local foods and beverages, and interactive natural environments. Be sure to develop a well-rounded offering to get their attention and deliver an experience that will keep them coming back.

Outdoor Adventure Market

This audience might be characterized as a younger subset of the Active Nature-Based market segment, with many similarities.

Characteristics:

- Age range – mid-twenties to late forties
- Mind set- fun loving, outgoing, inquisitive, adventurous
- Tastes – craft beer, local flavors, rustic yet comfortable, quality equipment
- Social choices – small groups, male and female friends, close bonding, loyalty



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- Hangouts – upscale night clubs, fitness centers, health clubs, brew pubs, wine bars
- Careers – wide range of interests from bike shops to law firms, educators and carpenters
- Residence – urban, rural, college towns, growing small cities,
- Buying patterns – Quality and durability, new features and benefits, local outfitters

How to Sell to the Outdoor Adventure Market:

- Focus offerings on active and adventure oriented activities and itineraries, designed for both short duration trips and longer, multi-day themed excursions.
- Offerings should focus primarily on outdoor activities as this market is made up of nature lovers.
- This audience strives to be environmentally responsible so that should be factored into plans for development of offerings for this market. “Green” claims should be well documented and substantiated if utilized.
- Contemporary cuisine, using local ingredients is appealing for this audience.
- Though this segment has discretionary income to spend, they are careful with how they spend. Quality is more valuable to them than quantity.
- Authentic experiences are a must.
- People in this segment are adventurous, with some looking for extreme challenges.
- Comfortable accommodations and even a well-organized camping area are sufficient for overnight stays.
- This segment is physically fit and welcomes participation in active multisport activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding (SUP) and distance/challenge races or events.
- This niche segment prefers an integrated vacation experience where a number of activities and types of experiences are mixed into the daily itinerary.
- Opportunities for exercise are important on a daily basis for this group.



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- The active traveler doesn't go by labels such as ecotourist, agrotourist, adventure traveler, or cycling enthusiast - they choose vacation experiences based on specific activities such as kayaking, hiking, or cycling, as well as the availability of traditional or local music, local foods and beverages, and interactive natural environments.

Cultural Creatives Market*

A growing niche market which may have keen interest in the experiential opportunities of Cayuga County has been labeled as the Cultural Creatives, a term coined by Paul Ray.

Characteristics*:

- Buyers of art, music, books, videos, and magazines. They listen to more radio and watch less television than any other group. Cultural Creatives are literate and discriminating, but only a few will do "New Age" styles, so diversify.
- Big consumers and producers of arts and culture as artists and writers, and go to readings, showings and workshops.
- People who like to talk about food (before and after), eat out a lot, enjoy gourmet and ethnic cooking, try natural and health foods, etc.
- Experiential consumers. They invented the experience industry, which sells enlightening experiences rather than "things"--psychotherapy, weekend workshops, spiritual gatherings, personal growth experiences. They're going beyond "stuff."
- Into vacation travel. Cultural Creatives are on the leading edge: exotic, adventuresome, educational, authentic, altruistic and/or spiritual. Tours of temples in India, tours of the back country, eco-tourism, photo-safaris, save-the-wildlife vacations, the Zen/Vipassana/Yoga/Sufi retreat instead of a vacation, etc. They don't want packaged tours, fancy resorts, cruises or Disneyland.
- Devoted to personalizing the home. Interior decoration is eclectic, with a lot of original art and crafts around the house. Their home shows who they are.
- Holistic. These are the innovators in and strongest consumers of personal growth books, alternative health care and natural foods. What ties these together is a belief in holistic health: that body, mind and spirit need to be unified.

How to Sell to Cultural Creatives*:

- Build relationships. To beat the chains, offer more than service. Develop a relationship with your customer that doesn't treat them like walking wallets. See them as friends and allies, people you share your excitement with. They are heavy-duty volunteers; get them involved with your organization, and back the good cause they're interested in. Because of their community orientation, you have an opportunity to make your store or business a local institution by working with them.
- Make authenticity your middle name. Cultural Creatives invented consumer authenticity, leading the rebellion against plastic, fake, poorly made, throwaway goods. It can be any style so long as it's the authentic version, and comes with a story. Shopping should be an experience with authenticity and human contact. It's bringing women's values into the marketplace. Ignore this at your peril.
- Respect quality. Cultural Creatives are careful, well-informed shoppers who don't buy on impulse, who read Consumer Reports before a big purchase. Not only that, they'll share what they know--they're innovators and opinion leaders, especially for books, music, art, magazines, fine foods, wines and microbrews. Tell them about your latest good stuff, and get them to spread the word.
- Get into stories, whole process & systems. Cultural Creatives demand "the big picture" of where a product came from, how it was made, who made it, and what happens when they're done with it.

**From Paul Ray, Cultural Creatives: The New Educated Consumer.*

Visiting Family and Friends Market

The family market consists of two different segments:

1. Families who are unfamiliar with a destination and who are visiting as outsiders.
2. Families who have relatives or friends living in the destination region. The primary reason for visiting the destination is to visit family members and friends.



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Characteristics:

- Age range – mid-twenties to late forties, though one area to consider is the multi-generational aspect of this audience where grandparents are caregivers for two working parents
- Mind set- dependability, flexibility, safety
- Tastes – craft beer, local flavors, family-friendly dining options
- Social choices – small groups, other family units
- Hangouts – libraries, family-friendly attractions, school events, shopping malls, walkable downtowns, parks
- Careers – varied, however often both spouses work
- Residence – urban, rural, college towns, growing small cities
- Buying patterns – Quality is important, but so is price, parents will spend much more on their kids than themselves

How to Sell to the Family Market:

- Offer activities that will build memories. When children visit an area, memories are cemented in their mind about the place. As young adults they may be tempted to revisit childhood memories with new found friends. As mature adults, people often recall childhood vacations and return to the destination with their own family. Generations of visitors can extend the season, fill beds during slow weeks in peak season, and generate revenues from ancillary products and services during family reunions.
- Flexibility, fun, space and variety are important. The primary goals of a family vacation, or even a visit to relatives, are to create good memories and to spend time together.
- It is sometimes difficult for people without children to develop family programs. To best deliver value to the family market, consider working with a teacher or an experienced camp counselor who works with children consistently.
- Deliver value! As long as the family is happy, they will value the experience. Children need space to romp and explore, while the adults need space to relax knowing that the children are safe and content.
- Flexibility and variety in food offerings are important to families. Children may be picky eaters (as are many adults), and therefore the restaurant or lodge should have options available that meet contemporary dietary restrictions.

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Posting menus and discussing dietary preferences during the pre-arrival stage is one method of meeting the distinct needs of family members.

- Understand that the family demographic is now “blended” and changing. The traditional family is no longer the only form of family unit in America, with many variations now part of the demographic.
- Additional demographic and lifestyle changes in the marketplace are occurring rapidly and travel providers hoping to capture these growing markets should pay attention to food preferences, activity preferences, and entertainment preferences of all potential visitors including the rising middle class of recent immigrants
- Women are no longer the only decision makers when it comes to vacation choices. With the shift in family makeup described above, more men are making decisions for vacations and this should be considered when developing family marketing strategies.

Foodies Market

Foodies are a growing segment of the population who are eager to try new food concepts and explore local culinary experiences.

Characteristics:

- Age range – mid-twenties to late fifties
- Mind set- learning while traveling, inquisitive, knowledgeable
- Tastes –local flavors, rustic yet comfortable, quality experience, local experts
- Social choices – small groups, family travel, bonding, individual interests
- Hang outs – trendy restaurants, farm to table experiences, community supported agriculture, food cooperatives and natural food stores, local butcher shops and vegetable stands
- Careers – rising professionals, college students, health care and fitness
- Residence – urban, college towns, growing small cities
- Buying patterns – Fresh, local, organic, hand crafted

How to Sell to Foodies:

- Foodies usually have knowledge of food trends, are aware of trends in farming practices, and seek out local or unique recipes. Fresh, local, organic, locally sourced, and on-site processing are important words to focus on.



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- Wineries are prime attractions for this audience.
- Agritourism attractions, such as farms that might produce artisanal cheeses and other dairy products, specialty vegetable farms, fruit producers, and farms that raise exotic animals are favorites of this culinary-focused visitor.
- Expectations of foodies include hands-on experiences that are well designed/orchestrated. Food and farm experiences should be designed so that visitors remain safe, clean, and comfortable. This visitor type wants the “authentic” experience without the reality of the hard work involved in farming and processing.
- This segment typically has had the opportunity to travel extensively, so they enjoy contemporary and authentically prepared cuisine.
- This audience likes to explore local cultures in an active rather than passive way. This market segment prefers to observe real life rather than visit static museum displays.
- Learning opportunities are important to the people who seek out culinary and agritourism attractions. Learning should be a core feature of the offerings available to these guests. The foodie visitors are like sponges and therefore the experience should include active learning, focused on interaction with the farmer or processing expert.
- Foodies enjoy learning about the area culture, heritage, food, and farm-based economy. Interpretive displays, signage, and labels within a farm or food processing environment can offer this visitor type meaningful opportunities to learn without the help of a guide.

NICHE MARKET STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

1. Take Advantage Of Opportunities Offered by the Cayuga County Office of Tourism

The CCOT offers several existing programs that align well with these identified niches. Existing businesses or new businesses should ensure they are aware of existing programs and that they are providing timely information to the tourism office to be sure they are well represented.

Cayuga County Tourism participates in several Regional Programs and Cooperative Marketing Programs that have some crossover with the niches identified in this document, including:

- Routes 5&20 promotion – a cooperative program of the Village of Skaneateles, Cayuga, Seneca, Ontario, Livingston and Genesee Counties, with the objective of promoting driving tours along the Cayuga County portion of Routes 5 & 20.
- Lake Ontario Sportsfishing Council (LOSPC) – a 7 county (Jefferson, Oswego, Cayuga, Wayne, Monroe, Orleans & Niagara) initiative to promote sports fishing on Lake Ontario.
- Seaway Trail – a 10-county initiative to promote the attractions along the 454-mile scenic route paralleling Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.
- Finger Lakes Regional Program- The 2014 cooperative 14-county program will again focus solely on public relations initiatives that will take the stories of the Finger Lakes to the next level of visibility and awareness, both nationally and internationally. The program includes pitches and press releases to major media, development of a regional press kit, press tours and events, and tracking and reporting of results from these activities.
- “A Welcome Surprise” Canadian Promotion – Cayuga County Tourism will once again participate in a collaborative Canadian promotion targeting Ontario, Canada, spearheaded by VisitRochester. This campaign will include a newspaper insert, radio spots and related web advertising, an e-blast campaign, public relations, key word search advertising, exhibits & brochure distribution, and social media.

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- Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway – A 3-county (Cayuga, Tompkins, & Seneca) initiative to promote the assets of this NYS designated Scenic Byway which runs around Cayuga Lake, The program includes a geocaching project as well as cooperative advertising.
- “I Love Fresh Air” – a 14-county Finger Lakes Vacation Region cooperative program made possible by a Regional Economic Development Council grant to promote outdoor assets and healthy living attributes. The program consists of an integrated program to include TV, digital marketing, collateral and public relations.
- Birding Brochure – Bird-watching tourism has attracted much attention in recent years as an environmentally friendly way of producing more visitor spending. With Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Sterling Nature Center, three State Parks and many other natural resources, Cayuga County is positioned perfectly for this market. The goal is to raise the profile of bird watching in Cayuga County through a simple brochure/map for bird watching enthusiasts.
- Sweet Treat Trail – The Finger Lakes ‘Sweet Treat Trail’ was created in 2012 to capitalize on culinary tourism through promotion of locally produced jams, jellies, syrups, honey, baked goods, fruit wines and other assorted locally produced ‘Sweet Treats.’ In 2014 the trail will continue to be promoted to build awareness of the trail.

Additional opportunities, tourism research, and the full range of initiatives being undertaken by the Cayuga County Office of Tourism can be found within their partner portal: <http://tourcayuga.com/partners/>

2. Walk The Talk

Before you plan to go after niche markets as an individual business, ensure that you have a well-thought out offering capable of delivering a fantastic experience and then make sure that visitors already coming to you know about it. Make sure your web page is updated with the new offering or information. Include it in your brochures or develop one special for the niche you wish to target. Make sure sales staff and front-line staff understand the audience, their expectations and what offerings are available so that they can begin to promote to these new audiences.

3. Advertising

Advertising opportunities to consider for niche tourism audiences include:



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Print – Focus on relevant publications in the local, regional or state-wide area depending on the size of your budget. For entities with more substantial budgets, consider state or northeast only media buys in well-known or focused publications. Often, this is best accomplished and most cost-effective by participating in cooperative advertising programs coordinated by a county tourism office.

Digital - Targeting niche audiences via digital options may be the independent operators best bet for cost-effective advertising. Several opportunities to consider are below:

Digital Ad Networks – Digital ad networks are able to be purchased that target the behavior, tendencies and likes of particular demographic. This can be done through both text based ads (such as in a response to a search engine query) or display advertising (banner ads). Retargeting is also a way to reach out to visitors that have already visited your site, reminding them of your additional offerings or seasonal changes.

Paid Social Media - Much like the digital ad networks, the prominent social media platforms allow for targeted paid advertising approaches by location and interest. The largest platform to consider is Facebook, which allows targeting by interests and likes, geography and other variables within their ad network. These ads can be used to drive additional “likes” or to drive traffic to selected landing pages on your website.

Distribution – Find regional or local distribution opportunities and deliver a rack card with the new offering(s). Offer a coupon or discount on the rack cards to help measure and generate results.

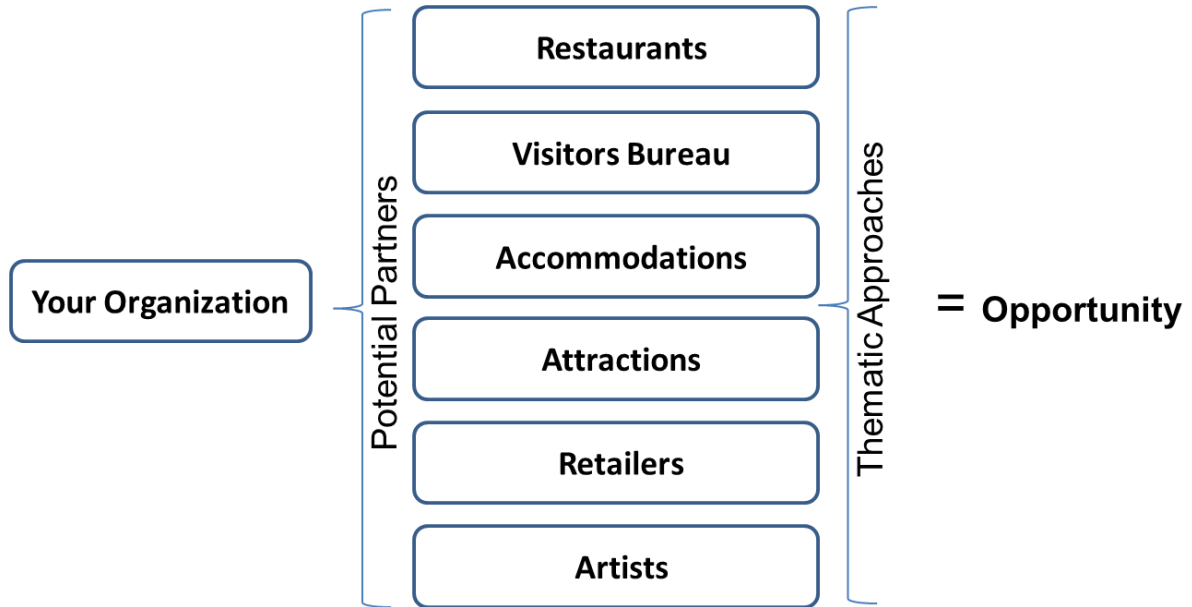
Television, radio and out-of-home advertising are also possibilities, however are not typically as targeted and may require more substantial investment.

4. Packaging and Partnerships

Successful partnerships are built upon commonalities in the mission and values of the partners as well as complementary products and services delivered consistently among the partner organizations. Shared passion for the particular product/service experience will project a genuine message to the visitors. Partnerships should be formal whenever possible, especially when revenues are to be shared and responsibilities for collecting revenues are delegated to specific partners within the group.

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The graphic shown above outlines a variety of partnership options that a business might consider. Multiple partnerships might be developed, each one formed around a different thematic experience. For example, a culinary partnership might be developed between a particular farm, a restaurant, a lodge, and an outdoor guide. The farm provides the venue for hiking, walking, or even mountain biking, as well as an educational opportunity to learn about the food grown on the farm. The partner restaurant may feature cuisine prepared from ingredients grown on the farm, and the lodge provides the accommodations for the visitors. This partnership forms the basis of a packaged experience that might be shaped into a two or three night stay.

Thematic trails, travel routes, and more specifically, tour itineraries usually represent broad themes of human activity. Itineraries not only present an easy-to-follow roadmap that leads people to your destination, but they also direct guests to other attractions and activities in your region.

When designing itineraries, it is best to create a variety—from half day tours to a full week—so that you can accommodate all levels of time investments and interest. Half-day itineraries, for example, are especially useful for attractions that are located within a one hour drive from a metropolitan area. A five-day itinerary, on the other hand, would be appropriate for tour operators, familiarization trips, or the international traveler.

Choosing lodging facilities for their cultural, historic or local appeal is one way of determining fit for a particular itinerary or thematic tour route. Restaurants can be



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preselected for an itinerary or general ideas about where to find food along a route might be adequate, allowing the visitor to identify food options that meet their dietary decisions. This does not mean to suggest that they could not be, or should not be, part of your itinerary. However, it also gives the lodging establishments and attractions an opportunity to recommend what they feel to be the best choices in their area at any given time.

5. Public Relations

A well-positioned story can generate significant rewards in visitor spending for an attraction, lodging property or restaurant. Opportunities for publicity are plentiful with a new offering, including:

- A release highlighting the new offering or service
- A release from multiple partners featuring a new package
- A pitch to a features writer about the new offering

Often, the first opportunity is the best – when it is new and capable of catching the attention of not only travel media, but local and regional media in general.

Targeting bloggers and journalists that have an interest in these types of activities for a potential familiarization trip or story placement is also a sound strategy.

To develop a press release list, consider media that your prospective visitor might read, watch or listen to. Develop your list based on geography – local, state-wide, and national publications, allowing for flexibility in the lists you send to. Tailored media releases are always preferable – don't simply blast it to everyone out there as that strategy will have little chance for success and may do more harm than good.

6. Social Media

Social media activities are another way to promote new or expanded tourism offerings. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest are the most prominent social media platforms and all offer unique ways to promote your new or expanded offering. Simply relaying your offering via postings and pictures to your existing followers is a solid strategy to start.

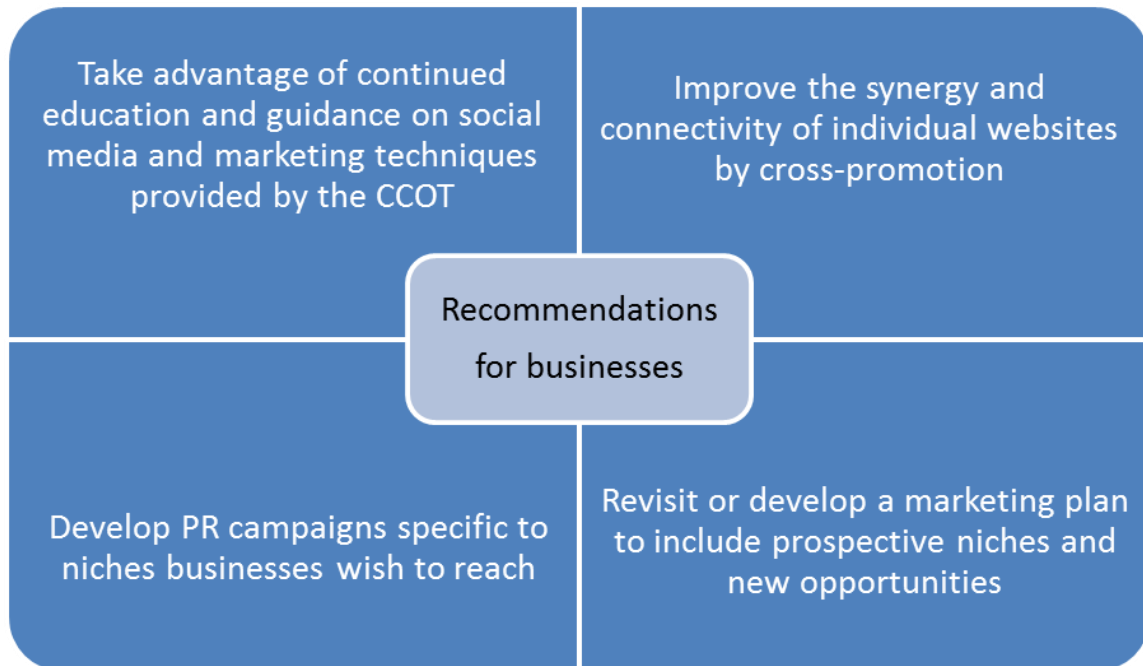
7. Event Development

Consider developing or coordinating an event featuring nature-based activities. Examples might include Cayuga County Birding Weekend, Water and Wildlife Weekend, or a series of ongoing events in coordination with packaging partners. Include craft breweries, local wineries, local entertainment, and other activities to

create a day-long event. Arts walks, art festivals and history-themed weekends also create opportunities for exposure and visitation.

8. Email Newsletters

Use this channel to tell your current subscribers about the new or expanded offering. Include special insider pricing for your loyal subscribers to build interest. Coupons and/or promotional discounts also may work well through this avenue.



BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN NICHE MARKETS

To add value to an existing business and to develop new tourism business products, people who own or manage existing businesses should complete a business plan and a thorough SWOT analysis (assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. Assistance in developing a SWOT analysis may be available through your local SCORE or SBA office.). This analysis should address questions around current capacity to deliver new experiences, location assessment, personal interests, financial capacity, partnership opportunities, equipment resources, and existing skills and knowledge of personnel. By engaging in a SWOT analysis, the business owner or manager will have a good indication of the capacity to add value to the existing tourism experience being delivered to current guests.

Once a SWOT analysis is complete and new business ideas are brainstormed, a thorough business and marketing plan should be created for each serious business development idea. The components of a business and marketing plan include:

- Concept Description
- How the concept fits into the existing business, if applicable
- The target markets
- Assessment of competition and possible partnerships
- Marketing strategy and tactics
- Pricing, packaging, and promotion ideas
- Operations processes and procedures
- Human resource and recruitment and training plan
- Financial projections including three year revenue and expense projections

Even if the business is adding value to an existing business, an abbreviated business plan should be developed in order for the proprietor to get a sense of the feasibility of the new business component. Essential to the modified plan would be a description of the product or service, the capacity requirements, an understanding of the market, a brief assessment of the competition, a financial plan including pricing formula, and a plan for delivering the experience.

Some new business and value added ideas based on the niches discussed in this report are presented below.

1. Landscapes, Lakes, and Wildlife

Target Market: Active nature-based visitors

Business Ideas and Considerations:

- Guided tours for guests. Partner with local guides to develop a guided experience that includes activities featuring landscapes, lakes, and wildlife.
- Develop evening presentations and discussions with local experts, university professors, and story tellers on the topics of landscapes, lakes, and wildlife.
- Invest in a library with books that feature the landscapes, lakes, and wildlife of the region.

Suggestions to make it easy for guests to explore:

Lodging properties could have:

- Binoculars available for borrowing
- Bird/wildlife guidebooks
- Hand lenses for close-up exploration of bugs, flowers, etc. (kids love this)
- Local trail maps

Pricing:

Value added experiences become part of an entire bundle of attributes of the tourism product. Pricing can be based on the cost of inputs such as labor, equipment, time, and materials. Prices of attributes such as an evening presentation led by a university professor or local expert should include a wage for the expert, the value of any food or beverage served, and a charge for the space used to deliver the event. The overall price can be factored into the base price of the core tourism product such as a hotel room, a meal, or a guided tour. The price per person is bundled into the core tourism product charge and then allocated to each input or person according to the overall charge for the good or service.

2. Outdoor Adventures: Cycling/Canoeing/Kayaking/Stand-up Paddling/Hiking

Target Market: Active, soft adventure, multi-sport enthusiasts

Business Ideas and Considerations:

- Invest in equipment such as road bikes, hybrid style bicycles, mountain bikes, helmets, water bottles, kayaks, stand-up paddle boards, day packs, fishing tackle, and canoes. This equipment can be rented by the hour or day part to guests and other visitors.
- Develop partnerships with outdoor outfitters: Select one or two outfitters that are in close proximity to your enterprise. Work with the outfitter to

identify two or three activities for which the outfitter is prepared to supply equipment upon request. Two outfitters are better than one because it helps ensure equipment availability. Outfitters may also have experienced guides on their staff either as dedicated guides or as retail associates, repair people, or buyers who are seasoned outdoor enthusiasts and who know the area. These guides will be essential in delivering an exceptional experience to the guest.

- Provide guided multi-sport experiences for guests and visitors. Experiences might include a morning bicycle ride, an afternoon kayak trip, or a guided fishing excursion.
- Provide transportation to access points: For guests who kayak or canoe, a ride to the put in point or a pick up from the take out area is essential. The host should develop a partnership with a driving service if they don't have a way to transport kayaks, paddle boards or bikes.

Pricing:

- Guided experiences can be charged per person or per group. Be sure to incorporate guide compensation, equipment costs, costs of maintenance, and other indirect costs into the price of the experience. Guided experiences can be packaged into an overall vacation package or stand alone for individual visitors who may be staying in other accommodations or with family or friends.

3. Agritourism; Exploring Farm to Table; Culinary Tourism, and Wineries

Target Market: Visiting Family and Friends, Cultural Creatives, and Foodies

Business Ideas and Considerations:

- Harvest events around specialty crops such as apples, grapes, and sweet corn.
- Children and family programming including hands-on activities, learning by doing activities, and fun events such as birthday parties or play days.
- Specialty food tastings on the farm, in the lodge, or at a winery.
- Food and wine pairings – restaurants and wineries could form alliances in order to offer food and wine pairing experiences at a variety of venues.
- Perhaps a picnic style event at a State Park or along a particularly lovely stretch of waterfront would be ripe for a food and wine event. Setting up tables in the winery itself with food catered from the partner restaurant would be a popular experience to consider.

Chef's table – a chef's table experience centers the guest in the middle of the kitchen where they observe and ask questions as the food is prepared in front of the guest. This experience is highly valued by foodies and cultural creatives alike and the guests in this segment are willing to pay well for such an experience.

Culinary classes – people from a wide range of backgrounds are eager to extend their skills and knowledge around the culinary arts. Cultural creatives and foodies in particular are willing to pay handsomely for professionally delivered culinary lessons. Lodges, bed and breakfasts, and even hotels can offer culinary classes during the slow season or in specially designed and outfitted teaching kitchens. Celebrity chefs or in-house chefs with talent to communicate and engage with guests might lead the culinary classes for guests and outside visitors.

Hands-on the Farm – Create value added business opportunities for guests who want to get up close with farming. Winter pruning techniques might be taught to guests during the off season when pruning of apples and grapes is at peak. Summer hand work such as fruit thinning, trellising or training apple trees and vines, fixing irrigation line, or planting and cultivating in the vegetable garden are examples of work that certain guests might enjoy for an hour or a day. The experience must be well designed and guided, with guests given formal training and subsequent hands-on experience in a group setup. Guests will want to work in teams rather than alone because the key ingredient besides learning is fun!

Selling Specialty Foods and Local Products - Lodging and restaurant operations could create a retail space to merchandise and sell local products made from local ingredients. Retail items could include for example, jams and jellies, maple syrup, crafts, art work, and other food products that visitors can purchase as souvenirs. Doing this helps bring the farm and local artisan businesses into the restaurant or lodging property.

Pricing:

People are eager to engage in value added agritourism and culinary experiences and are therefore willing to pay a premium when the experience is exceptional. Pricing can be based on the cost of delivering the value added experience. The business may need to increase staffing, purchase additional materials and other inputs, and develop educational materials for the new business. The cost of taking time away from the actual farm chores should be factored into the price charged guests if the farm hands or owners are expected to deliver the visitor experience.

Costs should be allocated to fixed and variable cost categories, and subsequently a reasonable price per person or per group should be charged to generate a return on



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the initial investment and the variable costs of operations. Pricing should also be competitive based on analysis of prices charged by competitors in the region, or if necessary, based on a competitive analysis of the prices charged by similar tourism operations outside of Cayuga County. Seasonality, level of demand, and the uniqueness of the experience should be considered when pricing a value added experience. During high demand and high season periods, prices can be adjusted to meet increased expenses required to deliver a unique experience to the visitors.

4. Art, Entertainment, and Performance: Contemporary Cultural Experiences

Target Market:

Cultural Creatives, Foodies, Families.

Business Ideas and Considerations:

Develop Creative/Arts Events-

These types of events might include:

- Open studio weekend – <http://www.vermontcrafts.com/links/open.html>
- Performance week - <http://www.saratogaartsfest.org/>
- Music Festival - <http://www.lakegeorgearts.org/lakegeorge-jazz.htm>
- Arts Walk/Hop - <http://vermontartguide.com/content/?p=1369>

These value added events can be organized town-wide, county-wide, or region-wide and cater to a broad cross section of market segments. Business partnerships will be required to successfully deliver a large scale event with activities scattered across a region or local community.

Pricing: Prices will be variable depending on the event. Each business should consider the costs associated with participating in an event and then charge adequately to cover costs and a profit margin acceptable to the organization.

5. Cultural Heritage: Stories of our past; museums, small towns, country stores, town centers, historic architecture, churches, historic sites, African American heritage.

Target Market:

Cultural Creatives, Friends and Families

Business Ideas and Considerations:

- Guided Cultural Heritage Tours. Guided walks including downtowns, churches and cemeteries featuring notable people from history. Guided cycling rides with stops at historic sites, old taverns, views of historic places, or places of importance to cultural history.
- Story telling for tour groups or guests of a lodging property. Good story telling incorporates historic figures, places, and events that had an impact on the destination. Story telling interprets in a lively, meaningful, and interesting manner the heritage of the destination, including its people, places, attributes, and things.
- Musical entertainment featuring performances of groups or individual musicians with talent to interpret stories of the past and present cultural heritage. Music of folk songs can be taught to groups of guests to make for a fun night of lively entertainment that people will remember and associate with the establishment hosting the entertainment.
- Special customized guided experiences can be offered to groups of visitors with common interests.

Businesses can provide a pamphlet on the history of the location on which the business is currently located. The history of the people, the building, the location, etc. with fun facts help connect the visitor to the place.

Business can develop a cultural heritage treasure hunt that features a map and clues to help visitors explore the cultural and natural heritage of the specific site, the local area, the town, or the region.

Pricing: Pricing by the person or by the group are two options. Price can also be included in a package which might include a guest room, a meal, and a guided experience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cayuga County possesses a wide range of resources available to businesses that wish to expand or to entrepreneurs who wish to start a new business.

Cayuga Economic Development Agency

www.cayugaeda.org

315-252-3503

2 State Street

Auburn, New York 13021

This organization should be the first stop for businesses looking to expand or get started. The Cayuga Economic Development Agency offers a wide range of services and opportunities for businesses, including access and information about:

- Financing Assistance through the CEDA Micro-loan Program, Cayuga County Loan Program and the City of Auburn Small Business Assistance Program.
- Incentives provided through both state and local sources.
- Training resources for workforce development through organizations such as the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES and Cayuga Works.
- Technical assistance to keep businesses productive, innovative and efficient through organizations such as SCORE and SBA.
- **Cayuga County 485b exemption:** This program provides an abatement over 10 years for a portion of the increase in assessment after capital improvements on a commercial building. All towns and villages accept the abatement and most school districts accept it. More details available at: http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/orpts/rp485bins.pdf
- **Cayuga County Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) Small Projects Policy:** This program allows projects \$250,000 - \$750,000 to access Sales Tax Exemption and Mortgage Tax Exemption. This program can be used in combination with the 485b tax exemption.



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Cayuga County Planning and ED

Cayuga County Development Corporation

www.cayugacounty.us/DoingBusiness/PlanningandEconomicDevelopment.aspx

315-253-1276

Cayuga County Office Building, 5th Floor

160 Genesee Street

Auburn, NY 13021

Cayuga County Planning and the Cayuga County Development Corporation works with the Cayuga Economic Development Agency on various state and federal loan programs, however businesses should first meet with the previously mentioned Cayuga Economic Development Agency on the initial application process.

The Cayuga County Planning Office can also provide technical advice and guidance to tourism businesses with regard to land use and zoning matters for any location within the County outside of the City of Auburn. While their office does not have the authority to review or grant specific zoning or site plan approvals within the Towns and Villages of Cayuga County, they can provide clarity and direction about local ordinances and related information to allow businesses to map out a clear path for potential projects. In addition, if infrastructure may be needed to accommodate larger developments - such as the construction of hotels or inns, the Cayuga County Planning office can help assess what is in place and identify potential funding sources for infrastructure expansion.

Office of Planning and Economic Development

City of Auburn, NY

Auburn Industrial Development Authority

www.auburnida.org

315-255-4115

24 South Street

Auburn, New York 13021

The City of Auburn and the Auburn IDA offer a range of programs for businesses, including:

- **City of Auburn Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP):** This program provides gap financing at prime, terms negotiable depending on collateral. There is a requirement to create jobs for low and moderate income individuals.
- **City of Auburn Façade Improvement Program:** This program provides matching funds at 3% for façade improvements. Terms are negotiable depending on collateral.



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- **City of Auburn 485b exemption:** This program provides an abatement over ten (10) years for increased assessments after a capital improvement on a commercial building. More details are available at:
http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/orpts/rp485bins.pdf
- **City of Auburn 485a exemption:** This program provides an abatement over twelve (12) years for increased assessments after a capital improvement on a mixed-use building that creates residential units. More details are available at:
http://www.tax.ny.gov/pdf/current_forms/orpts/rp485ains.pdf
- **Auburn Industrial Development Authority (AIDA) Small Projects Policy:** This program allows projects between \$100,000 - \$750,000 to access Sales Tax Exemption and Mortgage Tax Exemption. This program can be used in combination with the 485b and 485a tax exemptions.

Cayuga County Office of Tourism

www.tourcayuga.com
315-255-1658
131 Genesee Street
Auburn, NY 13021

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism is the Destination Marketing Organization for the county, promoting Cayuga County tourism worldwide to leisure, business, group and meeting markets.

The office offers a wide range of resources to prospective and current businesses including marketing programs and market research. This information can be accessed online via <http://tourcayuga.com/partners>.

Auburn Downtown Business Improvement District (Auburn BID)

www.auburndowntown.org
315-252-7874
128 Genesee Street, Suite 100
Auburn, NY 13021

What is a BID?

A BID is a specifically defined area where the properties within the boundary are assessed an extra tax that funds an organization to develop programs and create initiatives to help promote the district.

The Downtown Auburn BID is a membership organization of residents, business & property owners, non-profit organizations and government entities. By means of advocacy, marketing, promotion, event planning, research and collaborative efforts,

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the BID is committed to enhancing the appearance, economic viability and quality of life of the community.

BID Membership is comprised of about 100 property owners, 45 government departments or agencies, 250 business or organizations and over 500 downtown residents.

Members Services:

- BID staff acts as a liaison between its members and government officials on important issues
- BID's Beautification Crew works diligently to keeps the Downtown streets clean
- The Flower Pot Program, hanging baskets and flower beds BID maintains make Downtown more attractive
- BID organizes cooperative advertising programs to help reduce advertising costs for members
- Bi-weekly E-newsletters share member information, events, specials and opportunities for cross-promotion
- BID's searchable website has a complete directory of BID businesses; each member has their own page to list marketplace deals, events and available property listings
- BID's Facebook page is another social media outlet to promote member news
- BID staff gives business and property owners leads on those looking for space
- BID organizes and promotes events that draw people Downtown; these include summer concerts & parades
- BID research and stats on demographics and market information are useful in creating a business plan
- BID staff can provide design assistance with color scheme, signage, furniture and artwork selection
- If we can't help you with something, we can refer you to someone who will