

# **Cayuga County CVB 2017 Marketing Plan**

The majority of the 2017 Marketing Plan has been developed based on the Travel Market Research Study produced in 2015 by Young Strategies, Inc. for the Cayuga County CVB. The study includes 1661 completed surveys from visitors, residents and residents from neighboring counties. The range of surveys received from visitors and residents represents a broad range of behaviors and experiences and is deemed to be predictive of overall travel patterns for our destination.

We will continue to place particular emphasis on developing materials that appeal to a younger demographic; photos, video, TV commercial, web site, etc. promoting the creative lifestyle community found in Cayuga County, while maintaining the 'Boomer' market with traditional print lifestyle magazines and newspaper inserts.

While this plan sets a path for the future, it is also a document that must remain somewhat fluid as market conditions and opportunities develop and we craft our strategic plan for the future.

## **Key Economic Goals**

- Attract overnight visitors & increase occupancy tax revenue
- Increase visitor spending on lodging, recreation, food & beverage, retail and transportation
- Increase tourism employment
- Generate local and state tax revenue
- Provide tax relief for Cayuga County households

## **Key Programmatic Goals & Objectives for 2017**

Our overarching goal is to differentiate Cayuga County from other Finger Lakes counties by focusing future messages and imagery around the following unique attributes:

- Wide variety of **live entertainment** throughout the year which is rare in the region
- The **core tourism hubs** of Auburn, Aurora and Fair Haven
  - *Auburn* area -the vibrant 'creative community' reflecting the small town urban scene especially attractive to millennials
  - *Aurora* – scenic with shopping, upscale luxury lodging and dining, a year round destination
  - *Fair Haven* – the next great harbor destination
- Telling the story of our **iconic Americans**, i.e. Harriet Tubman and William Seward

We will strive to drive year round visitation with a focus on shoulder and off season, especially winter, ads and promotions, looking at partnerships with our Central New York counties to strengthen our message.

We will continue to develop the group market with direct sales marketing efforts.

We will continue our robust public relations program, partnering with the Finger Lakes Region and New York State.

### **Target Geographic Markets**

We will work to maintain the volume in our core New York market while extending our reach into opportunity areas, all within a six hour drive or less:

- Interstate 90 West - Buffalo, Rochester
- Interstates 81 & 87 – Eastern PA, Philadelphia suburbs, Scranton, Allentown, Harrisburg, New York City suburbs
- Interstate 90 East – Albany, Hartford, Providence, Boston suburbs

### **Target consumers**

While Boomers remain our primary market, we will also target GenXers and Millennials with public relations, web sites and social media targeted to those audiences. Adults without children will continue to be our primary target market as adult couples are available to travel year-round and have incomes allowing them to travel more often. We will also pursue the LGBTQ market with the imagery produced in 2015.

## **Performance Measurements**

Measuring the effectiveness of our marketing efforts is key to determining the success of our programs. The following metrics will be used to analyze our program:

- Occupancy tax collections
- Occupancy % and RevPar
- Attraction & event attendance
- Web site hits
- Information Center visitation
- Conversion from inquiry to visit
- Economic impact – visitor spending, jobs & tax relief due to tourism
- Tracking of public relations efforts; i.e. releases and press tours converting to placements
- Social media engagement

## **MARKETING TOOLS & RESOURCES**

### **Marketing Messages**

Multiple brand messages will be used in our marketing materials:

- Our primary brand message is *Tour Cayuga in the Finger Lakes. Make some waves.* – Don't settle for the norm. Discover Cayuga County's unique assets- outdoor recreation, scenery, culinary and cultural experiences and make your own personal memories to last a lifetime.
- *Write your own history while enjoying some of ours* – history & culture
- *Star in your own Vacation* – performing arts & entertainment
- *Looking for that Sweet Spot* – local culinary experiences, especially the Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail

### **Regional Programs/Cooperative Marketing**

Cayuga County participates in several collaborative programs with other counties to leverage our marketing dollars. Each of the following programs are administered through our regional TPA promotional program:

- **Lake Ontario Sportsfishing Council (LOSPC)** – an 8 county (Jefferson, Oswego, Cayuga, Wayne, Monroe, Orleans, St. Lawrence & Niagara) initiative to promote sportsfishing on Lake Ontario. The LOSPC was awarded a \$190,000+ grant through the NYS CFA program to launch a multimedia promotional campaign focusing on the area's outdoor resources with special emphasis on fishing opportunities.
- **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 Tourism Council (FLRTC)**- A cooperative 14-county program driven and funded by the County Tourism Promotion agencies. The organization recently completed a Destination Market Analysis and Strategic Marketing Plan to guide future activities. Top priorities for the FLRTC in 2017 include a regional public relations program and development of a content rich destination web site.
- **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 2017 program includes a brochure, advertising, cayugalake.com and a promotional video. We will also support the **Cayuga Lake Blueway Trail**, a new water trail in development that will help make Cayuga Lake a paddling destination.
- **Haunted History Trail** - Cayuga County Tourism will again be participating in New York State’s “Haunted History Trail” in 2017. The trail includes haunted sites in 31 counties across New York State. In Cayuga County, visitors will learn about the Seward House Museum’s Haunted History Tours and the Fingerlakes Mall’s paranormal activities via the trail’s web site [www.hauntedhistorytrail.com](http://www.hauntedhistorytrail.com), brochure, print and social media channels, and public relations efforts.
- **Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance (FLTA)** – The FLTA is an association of private sector attractions, tourism – related businesses and county tourism offices working together to enhance and promote visitor businesses for the Finger Lakes Region. They offer an array of marketing opportunities that Cayuga County will participate in, including Thruway Information Centers, a regional visitors guide and group tour planner, AAA program, and fingerlakes.org regional web site.
- **CNY REDC Arts & Tourism Committee** – The 5 counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Oswego, Onondaga and Madison make up the CNY REDC Arts & Tourism Committee. This consortium completed a data driven market research study in 2015 to identify how the 5 counties can work best together. In 2017 the committee plans to focus on expanding current efforts to enhance winter tourism and cross promote via the Simpleview web site platform as well as partnering with CNY Arts and the International Tourism Center planned at Destiny.

We will continue these regional partnerships and seek new alliances and coop opportunities to strengthen and compliment our position in the marketplace.

## **Advertising**

### **Digital Marketing/Social Media**

Cayuga County recognizes the importance of digital marketing as an efficient, cost-effective and measurable way to reach consumers. The program includes:

- monthly themed e-blasts
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram Tumblr, and Pinterest posts
- YouTube account
- Blogs
- Outsourced Facebook campaign

### **Print**

As print serves as the branding foundation of our advertising program, we will continue to devote considerable resources to newspaper and magazine advertising. In 2017, Cayuga County will participate in the NYSTIA Coop Buy that includes major publications; Oprah, Great Vacation Getaways newspaper insert, Philadelphia Magazine and Meredith Publications ( Better Homes & Gardens, Traditional Home, Midwest Living, Family Fun and Family Circle magazines. In addition, we will continue to advertise in other key publications that have worked to create visitor awareness for us in the past.

Additional funds are also allocated to print advertising to support our niche programs including wine & culinary, outdoors, seasonal, history & culture.

### **Television**

We will continue to run commercials in Rochester and the eastern suburbs promoting the creative lifestyle community found in Cayuga County as well as our unique culinary assets, breweries and wineries. The television commercial will be complimented by pre-roll video advertising on local news web sites and a variety of travel web sites targeted at potential GenX visitors.

### **Radio**

In 2017 we will continue to apportion a limited budget to regional radio advertising to promote special events that have regional draw during slower periods of tourism activity.

### **Website Development**

Redeveloping the tourcayuga.com web site by Simpleview in 2017 is a priority with an anticipated completion date of April 2017. The new website will have clear organization and navigation built on a deep understanding of how people research travel and use online content and tools. Our goal is for

the new design to capture the spirit of Cayuga County and build on our brand identity. The new site will function well on all mobile devices.

### **Collateral Program**

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism produces one comprehensive Travel Guide, with year-round information on Cayuga County. In 2017 we will print 55,000 travel guides to be used as our primary fulfillment piece. An updated 'Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail' brochure will also be produced to reflect the 2017 program.

### **Photography & Audio/Visual Program**

We will continue to update our photo and video library with new imagery reflecting our most popular assets to be used in print and digital advertising, publications, and for public relations purposes. We will particularly focus on winter as it is the season that needs more promotional effort and will give us more content for collaborative opportunities being developed, particularly with our CNY partners.

### **Research**

We continue to purchase a 'Comparative Counties' monthly report from Smith Travel research, which provides us with hotel occupancy and room rate data. These reports are valuable market tracking tools, helping us to gauge the impact of our promotional efforts. We will use the Young Strategies Marketing Report completed in 2015 to craft our future marketing strategies. We will also use all research available through the NYS Division of Tourism, Travel Trade Research Association, and other reliable sources to make sound marketing decisions. In 2017, we will conduct a small visitor survey based on 2016 inquiries to update our data and track trends.

### **Public Relations**

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism recognizes the power of public relations to garner added exposure and reach large audiences and plans to participate in the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council public relations program once again, partnering with I Love NY when appropriate. The program includes:

- Social media
- Promotional opportunities
- Media visits
- Editorial calendar monitoring
- Media lead tip sheets
- Media pitches
- Press releases

We will supplement this program with our own in-house promotional efforts regionally.

### **Travel Shows**

Cayuga County will participate in the New York State Travel Industry Association (NYSTIA) Show program and the Lake Ontario Sportsfishing (LOSPC) Show Program. In addition, we will have a presence at the New York Times Travel Show in cooperation with Canal New York.

| <b><u>Show</u></b> | <b><u>Location</u></b> |
|--------------------|------------------------|
|--------------------|------------------------|

*In conjunction with New York State Travel Industry Association/CONY:*

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Cleveland Outdoor Adventure Show                          | Cleveland, OH    |
| Snowbird Extravaganza Show                                | Lakeland, FL     |
| Tri –State Outdoor Expo Boat Show<br>& Paddle Sports Show | Pittsburgh, PA   |
| Philadelphia Auto Show                                    | Philadelphia, PA |
| AAA Great Vacation Expo                                   | Columbus, OH     |
| Great American Outdoor Show                               | Harrisburg, PA   |
| AAA Reading/Berks Travel Odyssey                          | Wyomings, PA     |
| Toronto Golf & Travel Show                                | Toronto, ON      |
| Erie Sport & Travel Expo                                  | Erie, PA         |
| AAA Southern New England                                  | Foxborough, MA   |
| WNY Sport & Travel Expo                                   | Hamburg, NY      |
| AAA Travel Marketplace                                    | Long Island, NY  |
| Travel & Vacation Show                                    | Ottawa, ON       |
| Day Trips & Destinations                                  | Plantsville, CT  |
| Syracuse Nationals  | Syracuse, NY     |
| NYS State Fair  | Syracuse, NY     |
| Northeast RV Show   | Sufferen, NY     |

*In conjunction with Lake Ontario Sportsfishing Promotion Council:*

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Greater Niagara Fishing & Outdoor Expo | Niagara Falls, NY |
| Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Fest       | Doswell, VA       |
| Great American Outdoor Show            | Harrisburg, PA    |
| Alleghany Sport, Travel & Outdoor Show | Monroeville, PA   |
| Springfield Sportsmen’s Show           | Springfield, MA   |
| World Fishing & Outdoor Expo           | Suffern, NY       |

*In conjunction with Canal New York*

New York Times Travel Show

New York, NY

### **Group Sales**

Our group sales program works to leverage our tourism assets for meetings and conferences and group tours. Strategically located within New York State with many sought after activities and a variety of lodging options, Cayuga County is positioned for growth in these markets. In 2017 we will continue to focus the majority of our efforts on the group tour market as we feel this has the best opportunity for growth with our current product offerings. We will also develop new collateral for the meetings market so we can be reactive to inquiries. The program goal is to attract meetings and groups for multi-day and multi-night trips by focusing on activities that support our ongoing market efforts.

Key elements of the program include:

- **Trade Shows**

- ABA Marketplace
- Heartland Travel
- TPA Dance Travel
- DONYS Travel Show

- **Sales Missions**

- I Love NY Canadian Sales Mission Eastern Ontario & Quebec

- **Collateral –updated with new brand**

- **Sponsorships**

- **Familiarization Tours/Site Visits**

- **Groups & Meetings e-newsletters**

- **Lead generation and follow-up**

### **Sales Outreach**

Funds have been allocated for sales meetings, individual fams, and a front-line fam.

### **Information Center Services**

Funds have been allocated to have the Cayuga County Travel Guide distributed at key information centers on most major routes into the Finger Lakes. In addition, we will continue to contract with Yankee Doodle brochure distribution to distribute our travel guide in western New York.

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism will continue acting as a year-round information center and we will also maintain information racks in Weedsport, a key entry point from the NYS Thruway at the strategically located Tim Horton's/Arby's.

New in 2017 will be participation in the **New York Welcomes You** program that includes a feature in the 'New York's Best Experiences' Recommendations Guide and Travel Guide distribution on the New York's Best Experiences Tour at a variety of consumer shows.

### **Mailing/Distribution Program**

The Cayuga County Visitors Guide and other collateral will be sent first class either directly from our office or by a fulfillment house for larger mailings. Shipping brochures to travel shows and info centers is also accounted for.

### **Telephone Services**

Cost for toll-free 800# service for visitor inquiries.

### **Special Programs**

Several special projects will be developed and implemented during 2017 to increase visitor traffic, especially during our shoulder seasons:

#### **Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail**

The Finger Lakes 'Sweet Treat Trail' was created in 2012 to capitalize on culinary tourism through promotion of our locally produced jams, jellies, syrups, honey, baked goods, fruit wines and other assorted locally produced 'Sweet Treats.' In 2013, we created a 'tasting tour' and also worked with Cayuga Community College to create a promotional video. The trail has garnered significant media attention and interest from tour operators as well as individual travelers. The Trail received the Cultural Heritage Award from NYSTIA and was named one of the top ten food trails by USA Today's Readers Choice in 2015. We will continue to fine tune trail activities and promotional efforts that will enhance the profile of the Trail including print ads, social media and public relations efforts.

**Local & In-house promotions** – We will continue to provide shoulder season promotional items, trivia booklets and FREE Maps to our tourism partners to encourage longer and return stays as well as easy navigation in and around the County.

**Destination Weddings Promotion-** Destination weddings can be big business bringing food & beverage as well as room revenues to our hotels. In addition the wedding industry positively affects multiple smaller enterprises such as caterers, beauty suppliers, photographers, etc. that

provide wedding-related services and products. In 2014 we created a destination wedding guide and promoted it with limited advertising. In 2017 we will continue to promote Cayuga County as a wedding destination.

**Historic South Street Walking Tour** –In 2015 we created a simple self-guided tour booklet focusing on the historical, cultural and architectural points of interest on historic South Street in Auburn. We will promote this tour as one of our activities that is healthy, pet-friendly and historic.

### **Bird Watching**

Bird watching is the fastest growing outdoor recreation in New York State with an estimated 3.8 billion bird watchers. The Cayuga County Office of Tourism's 'For the Birds' guide to bird watching is a very popular guide, already in its second printing. We will continue to promote bird watching in Cayuga County through public relations, digital and social media and limited print advertising.

### **Cayuga County Heritage Trail**

In 2017 we will work with our County museums and historical sites to create a trail that can promote our heritage sites collectively, especially the smaller sites that do not have the staff nor budget to accomplish this on their own. We will look at creative ways to tell the story of Cayuga County's heritage and attract additional visitors to the sites so they will enjoy and support these important partners in Cayuga County's history.

12/27/16

###