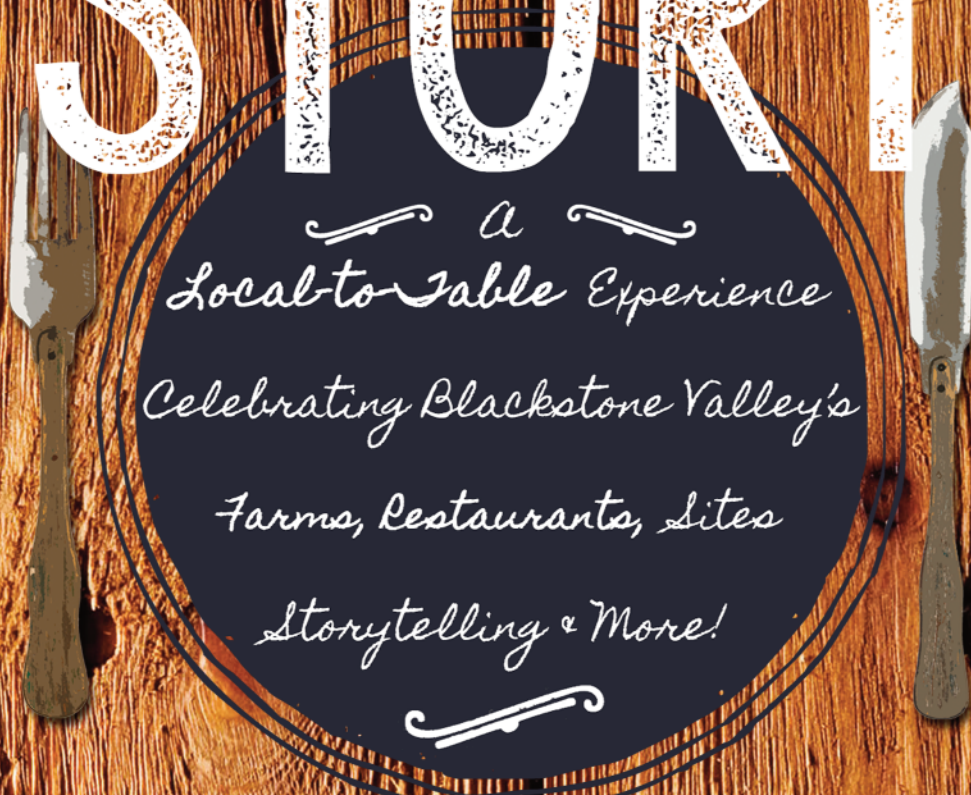


31st ANNUAL CELEBRATION



BLACKSTONE VALLEY
TOURISM COUNCIL

FEED *us a*
STORY



Thursday, October 6th 5 PM - 8 PM

Blackstone Valley Visitor Center
175 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI

Welcome

As Chairman of your Board of Directors, I am pleased to welcome you to the 31st Annual Meeting of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated group of talented staff and volunteers. Without their work we would not have been able to meet our objectives for making Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley a strong and vibrant region for visitors and residents.



David Balfour

It has been a tremendous experience to watch the Tourism Council grow over these last three decades from a small tourism organization promoting Northern Rhode Island to one that has received several major international awards and been instrumental in the development of our Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.

This year, we not only look back at our many accomplishments developing Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley into a world-class tourism destination, but also ahead into the future and the continued advancement of our tourism assets. The newly established Blackstone Valley Heritage Trust Fund will continue the revitalization of our natural resources, and advance the environmental education taking place on our newly-renovated Blackstone Valley Explorer with interesting high-tech learning tools and efficiencies.

As we keep meeting our challenges we thank all of our friends in the Blackstone Valley community for their ongoing support across these 31 years. We also appreciate the assistance of our national and state leaders in helping to sustain the programs of the Blackstone Valley. We are in a very exciting time as Blackstone Valley grows through the creation our new National Park.

*With deep appreciation,
David W. Balfour, Chairman*



Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Board of Directors 2016-2017

Board Members

David Balfour, Chairman
Barry Mechanic, Vice-Chairman
Dave Richards, Secretary
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer
Mark Brodeur, ex officio
Louis Yip
Deb Berardis

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Alex Parmenidez
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Recognitions



Eric Delin

Blackstone Valley Excellence in Arts and Design

Eric Delin
Delin Design

Blackstone Valley Excellence in Community Partnership and Support

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Ann Jalette



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Blackstone Valley Footprints in History Providence & Worcester Railroad Company

William Blackstone Society
Donald Leighton
BETA Engineering



Donald Leighton



Margaret Carroll

Blackstone Valley Recognition
Margaret Carroll
Millville Historical Society

31st Annual Dinner Planning Committee

Donna Houle, Geraldine Barclay-King, Amanda Wood, Natalie Carter, James Toomey
Joan Loos, Wendy Jencks, Patti McAlpine, Olon Reeder, Jaclyn Guglielmo



*To Inspire and Increase Sustainable Tourism
in the Blackstone River Valley*

Year in Review

For over 30 years, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has been working hard to make their community one of the most attractive places to visit in Rhode Island. In the past, despite its many historic landmarks and museums, the Blackstone Valley has never been one of the most popular places to visit in this small state because of the reputation of not only being an extremely polluted waterway but also being located in one of the poorest communities. But thanks to the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, the Blackstone Valley is now one of Rhode Island's most attractive and visited tourism destinations, along with recently being named Rhode Island's first and only national park. It is a major art destination and also is home to some of the state's finest restaurants and most unique dining experiences.

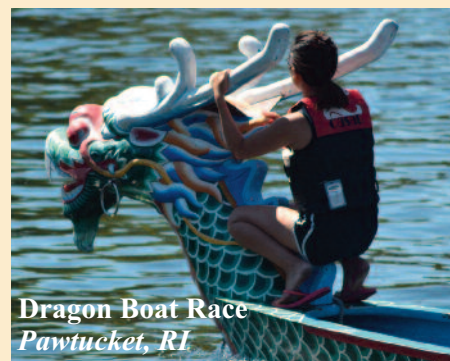
The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has a way of getting visitors right into the action where they can interact with the environment and also learn new things about the area. They offer many types of activities including waterways for boat tours, bike paths and hiking trails, and there is an abundance of wildlife and fall foliage to make being outdoors exciting. But it is not all about the visitors here in the Valley, the

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has also found ways to strengthen their community, economy, and environment to create a happier, and much healthier living place for residents. They do a

great job of reminding those who live here that northern Rhode Island is an exciting, beautiful and unique place.

Aside from being a leader in transforming the Blackstone Valley into an internationally-recognized visitor destination, within this past year alone, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council has been able to bring excitement to the visitors through their yearly, highly anticipated events, along with some new ones.

This year, the Council presented the 17th Annual Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat Races & Taiwan Day Festival, a signature Rhode Island event that showcases Rhode

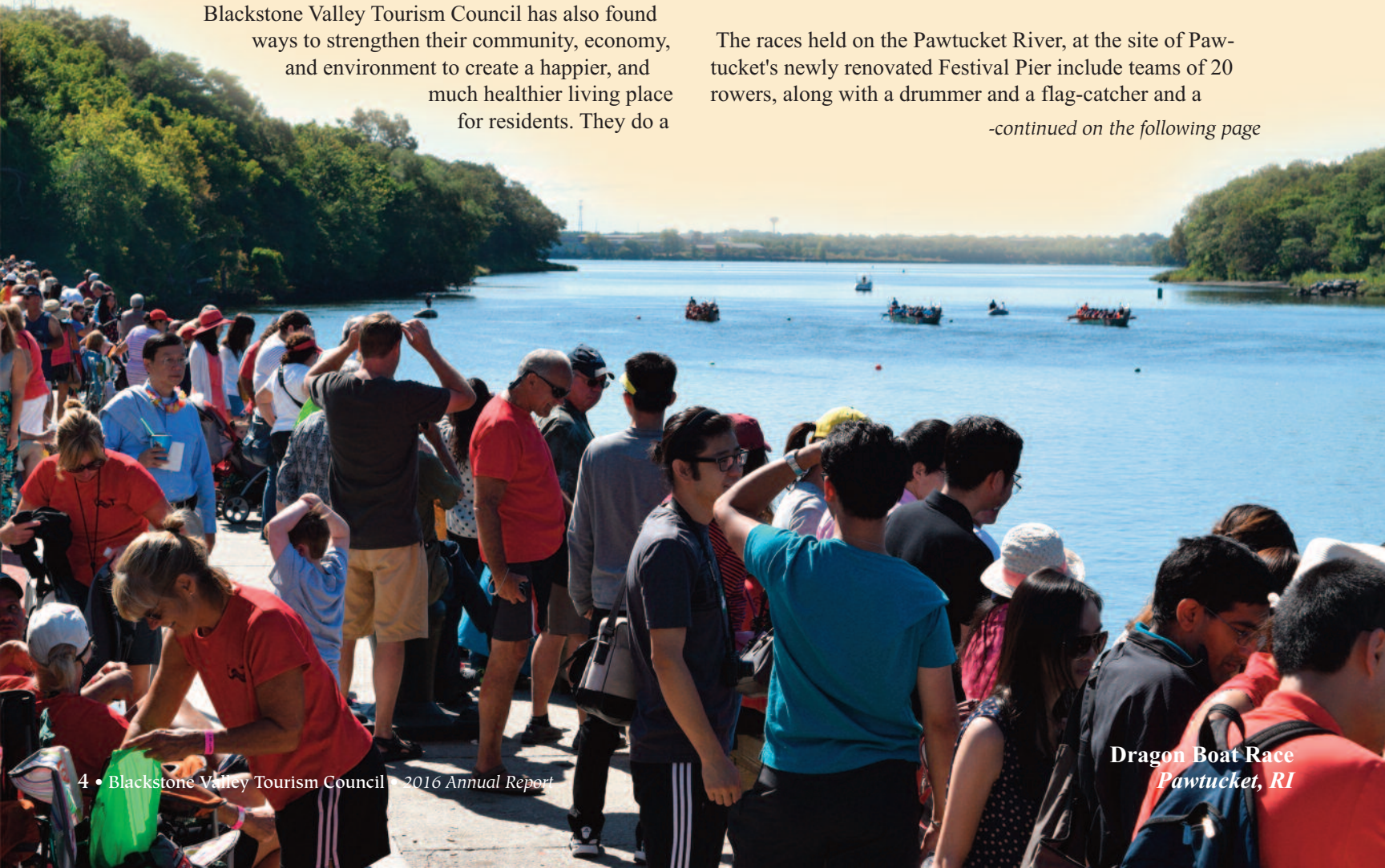


Dragon Boat Race
Pawtucket, RI

Island's Asian cultural community and their social, economic development and quality of life impact on our state.

The races held on the Pawtucket River, at the site of Pawtucket's newly renovated Festival Pier include teams of 20 rowers, along with a drummer and a flag-catcher and a

-continued on the following page



Dragon Boat Race
Pawtucket, RI

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steerer, who race the beautiful fiberglass boats 1,000 feet while the crowd cheers from the shoreline. The day is also filled with Taiwanese crafts, entertainment, Asian food, and the much-anticipated watermelon and dumpling eating contests.

Aside from putting together events for sight-seeing, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council continues the popular Culinaria Tours of area restaurants and dining establishments.

Monthly public dining events spotlight each establishment and highlight a popular meal showing how it is prepared.

The Council also collaborated with the city of Woonsocket and

A leader in transforming the Blackstone Valley into an internationally-recognized visitor destination



Budare Grille, Central Falls
Blackstone Culinaria Food Tour

Riverzedge Arts in the rebranding and repositioning of the city's Main Street Arts and Entertainment District.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council created the Paths to Progress Committee to begin the effort to complete the bike paths, not only in the Blackstone Valley but throughout the state.

-See In Review page 7



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National Park Service

New Harvest Coffee Roasters

Northern RI Chamber of Commerce

Pawtucket Red Sox

RI Fruit Growers Association

Sassy Momma

Supreme Dairy

Ten31 Productions

Vose True Value Hardware

Wright's Farm Restaurant

Yacht Club Soda

In Review
 continued from page 5

Director Bob Billington traveled with local officials, historians and others to Quebec, Canada this year as part of a mission by the Museum of Work & Culture, the City of Woonsocket and other local leaders to re-establish social, cultural and economic development ties between Woonsocket, Blackstone Valley and Quebec.

Every year since 1989, the Tourism Council has sponsored a Fall Foliage train trip on the Providence & Worcester Railroad. In 2015 and for the past 13 years, the highly-anticipated trip traveled to Putnam, CT for a fun-filled day of arts and crafts, a Farmer's Market, musical performances, the annual Putnam Pumpkin Festival, a church bazaar, outdoor dining and antique shopping.

One of the biggest and most well-known events developed by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is the annual Polar Express Train Ride operating out of the Woonsocket Depot. This year's season recorded over 16,000 passengers participating, including visitors from out of state and even internationally from Europe. The event, sanctioned by The Polar Express owners Warner Brothers and their designated man-

-See *In Review* page 11



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Congratulations to Blackstone Valley Tourism for another great year!

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 &
 THE CITY OF
 PAWTUCKET**

Are proud to support the efforts of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and congratulate the 2016 award recipients.

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Staff

Robert D. Billington, Ed. D., President
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations
Donna Houle, Manager of Special Projects
Amanda Wood, Office Manager/Translator
Olon Reeder, Public and Intergovernmental Relations
James Toomey, Director of Marketing
Geraldine Barclay-King, Program Director
Joan Loos, Program Associate
Lisa Castellone, Fund Development
Wendy Jencks, Visitor Center Manager
Ryan Bassett, Program Associate
Jerry Assis, Visitor Center Staff
Silvio DiPippo, The Blackstone Shop
Robert Gilson, Blackstone River State Park Volunteer Staff Coordinator
Donna Kaehler, Keep Blackstone Valley Beautiful Co-ordinator

Internship Program

- Johnson & Wales University
- University of Rhode Island
- Ser-Jobs For Progress
- Ser-Jobs Summer Youth Employment Program

William Blackstone Society

Leonard J. Panaggio*	John Worsley
Patrick M. Malone, Ph.D.	Joseph O'Donnell, Jr.*
Luther H. Blount*	Peter Conway
David Gulvin*	Robert Conway
Albert T. Klyberg	Helen L. Moroney*
David Macaulay	Donna Houle
Robert D. Billington	Gary Furtado
Louise Lind*	Rick Greenwood*
Clinton Johnson*	John Gregory
Thomas J. Shanahan	Gene Peloquin
Robert E. Metivier	Kathy Hartley
Carol A. Metivier	Louis Yip
Bernard G. Mondor*	Sunny Ny
John Chan	Daryl Sherman
Michael D. Cassidy	Michael Hebert
David W. Balfour	Marcia Green
Dana M. Newbrook	Raymond Bacon
Elizabeth "Betty" Johnson*	Bill Belisle, Jr.
Wilfrid L. Gates, Jr.	Dave Belisle
Rose Lavoie	John Monaghan
Tom Ward	* deceased



A NEW EXHIBIT

frogs!

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A photograph of a group of people celebrating at a casino table. In the center, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black lace top, has her mouth wide open in a shout and her right arm raised in a fist. To her left, a man in a dark suit and red tie is smiling and looking towards her. To her right, a man in a light blue polo shirt is also smiling and looking towards her. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and the warm, ambient lighting of a casino.

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In Review
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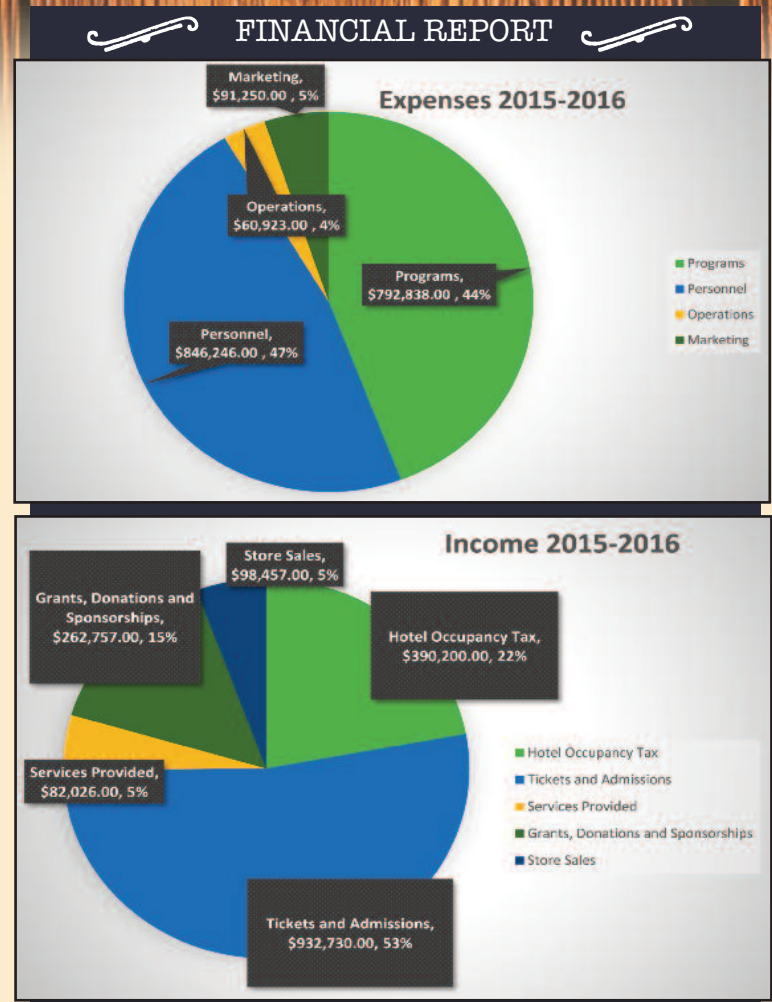
ager, Rail Events, is nationally noted for its unique interactive production of the famed story written by former Rhode Island-based author Chris Van Allsburg.



The Council also organized officials from Pawtucket, Central Falls and Cumberland to re-start the three-community Broad Street Regeneration Project, which the Council initiated in 2009. This initiative helps to locate startups and community-oriented and culturally diverse small businesses to the Broad Street corridor, running through the three communities.

The council also partnered with the other Rhode Island regional tourism directors and the State's new Chief Marketing Officer to

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In Review

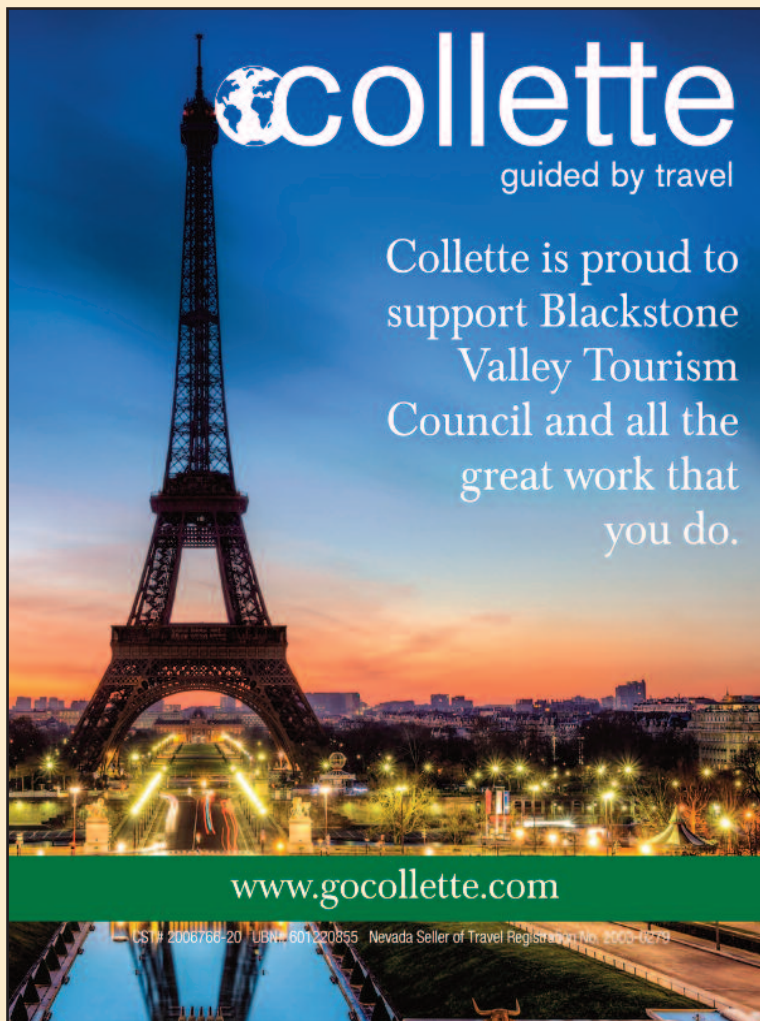
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reformat Rhode Island's state tourism and marketing efforts, following the Governor's request to have more active local citizen and regional engagement in better refining the State brand and messaging.

After the idea was proposed that the Pawtucket Red Sox may move the team to Providence, the Tourism Council got involved and met with state and local officials and the team owners to convince them to stay at McCoy Stadium in Pawtucket. The Pawsox agreed to stay until at least the year 2020 and at that point the situation will be re-evaluated.

During this past year, the Council also worked to help support and promote the efforts of the new owners of the Pawtucket Kellaway Center craft brewery, which will be the host site for the return of famed RI brewer Narragansett Beer and other artisan brewers.

In April, Council President Dr. Robert Billington was inducted into The Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame. He was recognized for his years of service and efforts in promoting and developing the Blackstone Valley into one of Rhode Island's premier heritage and cultural destinations. This was a big step for not only the



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Blackstone Valley but also for the community as a whole. Aside from being inducted into the Hall of Fame, Bob actively participates with other tourism partners through service on a special House Tourism Commission, and meeting with Commerce RI representatives on the revised Rhode Island tourism marketing and branding.



Dr. Bob Billington

Because of the frequent use of the Blackstone Valley Explorer river boat, it was time for a major renovation during the past year.

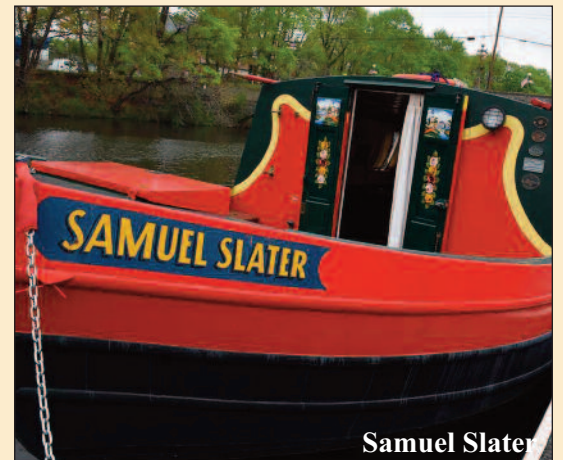


Blackstone Valley Explorer

The Council rechristened the 40-passenger river tour boat, which included a complete makeover and updates for the 23-year-old vessel. The Council also announced a partnership with Mystic

Aquarium, conducting environmental education tours along the Blackstone River and adjacent waterways.

After a six-year absence, the authentic British-built canal boat Samuel Slater returned to the Blackstone River. Up to four people can book overnight accommodations on the vessel, the only one of its kind in New England.



Samuel Slater

To wrap up a great year, the Tourism Council brought the American Girl Doll Train back to Woonsocket. This was a special event held September 17th to celebrate the amazing world of American Girl Dolls and to bring the young girls and their families into the fantasy of the historical idea of the lives behind each doll. This year's activities included a raffle with over \$1,000 worth of prizes

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*C*ongratulations
to the staff of the
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
for your
outstanding contributions
to our community





Thank you Blackstone Valley
Tourism Council for 31 years of
advocacy in our community!

Mayor James Diossa
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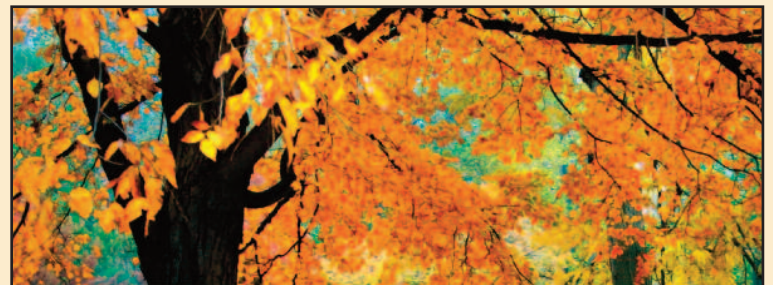
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In Review

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for the winner and her doll. Events around the celebration highlighted the new status of the region as the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park.

People young and old can take something factual and interesting away from each event offered by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. Not only are the events presented by the Tourism Council fascinating to the visitor, but they also have a way of incorporating a history lesson within each and every event.



**Blackstone River State Park
Visitor Center Volunteers**

Jerry Aissis	Ruth Pacheco	Sandra Cooney
Joe Billington	Andrew Whalen	Pearl Ferland
Beverly Daignault	Jim Wilbour	Lori Shaken
Jerry Noel	Herb Johnston	Ray Deslauriers
Steve Menatian	Eric Sjoblom	Louis Mailloux
Claudette Moore	Minn Robidoux	Sally Wilbour

**Blackstone Valley
Explorer/Samuel Slater Staff**

Patti McAlpine, *River Programs Coordinator*
 Captain Bob Dombrowski (*and Samuel Slater Canal boat*)
 Captain Matthew Prendergast (*and Samuel Slater Canalboat*)
 Captain Sheila Paquette
 Captain Theodore F. Green
 Captain Joe Walkden
 Tour Guide/Crew Paul Papineau
 Tour Guide/Crew Diane Mailloux

Mystic Aquarium Staff for Explorer

MaryEllen Mateleska, *Director of Education & Conservation*
 Amy S. Gollenberg, *Director of School Programs*
 Alyssa Richard (*Educator*)
 Jeannine Louro (*Educator*)
 Jeffrey Swanlund (*Educator*)
 Charlotte Tisch (*Intern*)



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and advance ongoing river education aboard the
Blackstone Valley Explorer riverboat.



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