

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Inc.

Annual Work Plan 2016

This Annual Plan is designed to support the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's Strategic Plan of 2015.

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is the state-designated tourism planning and development agency for the cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, and the towns of Cumberland, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Smithfield, Burrillville and Glocester, Rhode Island, USA.

The Council is a not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1985. It produces program-driven-marketing capability to the tourism organizations and communities of the Blackstone River Valley.

The Council serves Rhode Island and the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor communities with resilient, sustainable, Geotourism-based, whole-community tourism development programs that integrate with resident needs while enhancing and protecting the character, environment, arts, culture, heritage, aesthetics and commerce of the Blackstone River Valley.

In an effort to draw visitors to the Blackstone Valley, the Tourism Council operates several events, two Visitor Centers, one England-built Canal Boat and one 40 passenger river educational boat to leverage visitor spending and the Valley's attractiveness.

Ongoing Programs and Projects of work

- Assist the Blackstone River Valley's National Park development
- Continue developing our affiliation with Keep America Beautiful
- Continue our partnership with Mystic Aquarium on the *E/V Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Operate the *Blackstone Valley Explorer* from Central Falls Landing, Festival Pier in Pawtucket, East Providence and Cold Spring Park in Woonsocket
- Manage the Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Fall Foliage excursion to Putnam CT
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Polar Express train ride from Woonsocket
- Present the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony
- Celebrate United Nations World Tourism Day
- Continue to build the Blackstone Valley Tourism Network
- Further develop the Hachiko Monument activities
- Consider further development on the American Heritage River Guide Program
- Manage the Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat and Taiwan Day Festival in conjunction with the RI Chinese community
- Offer advertising opportunities in the Blackstone River State Park Visitor Center
- Work with the Bryant University, Johnson and Wales University, Brown University and the University of Rhode Island and Shea High School, educating students in tourism planning and development
- Develop the Blackstone Valley Canoe and Bicycle Tour programs
- Support tourism development and planning for all Blackstone Valley communities
- Continue to build upon the Chocolate Mill Park and Gateway Plan

- Collaborate with federal, state, local, non-profit and/or for-profit agencies for the benefit of tourism programs in the communities in the Blackstone Valley
- Participate in conferences and educational opportunities that benefit the mission of the Tourism Council and educate the staff to better serve the Blackstone Valley
- Develop additional interpretive educational programs for the *E/V Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Continue to work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Inc.
- Work with City of Central Falls to complete the Central Falls Landing Project
- Continue work to build the Keep the Blackstone Valley Beautiful as the Keep America Beautiful affiliate for Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Smithfield and Woonsocket
- Continue to work with the Cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket and the Town of Cumberland in managing the Broad Street Regeneration 2.0 program
- Continue working with the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services Program
- Continue “Events of the Week” program for the Blackstone Valley of Rhode Island
- Continue to implement recommendations of the .Sbest United Nations World Tourism Organization Certification
- Continue to operate the Blackstone Alert program along the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor
- Stage two programs for the Sustainable Tourism Planning and Development Laboratory
- Enhance “Tour of the Week” program for Group Tour Operators interested in visiting the Blackstone Valley
- Work with the Providence and Worcester Railroad to encourage wheelchair accessibility aboard the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railroad tours
- Work, in conjunction with the State of Rhode Island and the regional tourism district managers, to promote Rhode Island as a premiere visitor destination
- Work, in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, to promote the Blackstone Valley as a destination
- Work to produce an Official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide
- Enrich each of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council websites
- Expand the Blackstone Valley on-line shop
- Continue building the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Festival
- Continue to support the Rhode Island State Society
- Continue to host the Blackstone River Conference
- Support the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame
- Support the Rhode Island Tourism Districts Inc.
- Continue to support the development of the Blackstone River Bikeway
- Continue to lease the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Continue work with the Amber Valley of England on our 25th year of collaborations
Continue in the planting of Cherry Tree Project along Roosevelt Ave in Central Falls and Pawtucket
- Expand Group Tourism Efforts throughout the US

New Projects and Programs

- Build on the PictureBlackstone.com web site - the digital photo archive of and for the Blackstone Valley
Develop a Manufacturers' Tour of the Blackstone Valley
- Build up the Blackstone Valley “Carbon Footprint Campaign” for visitors, businesses and residents to make the Blackstone Valley more environmentally conscious
- Develop “Sam Patch” Day in Pawtucket
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Heritage and Environmental Trust Fund to insure the *Blackstone Valley Explorer* operations into the next decade

- Develop the Blackstone Valley Cultural Heritage Trail
- Hire or contract a sales and sponsorship coordinator
- Develop a "How to Discover the Blackstone River Valley" tour
- Build on the *Made in Blackstone Valley* campaign
- Work to create a printed history of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Develop a Blackstone Valley "Eco-lab Discovery" Program and other educational programs to include the vital river ecosystem and river history
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Leisurely Cycle Tours

International Efforts in Promotion

- Continue international development of tourism partnerships with Canada, England, Taiwan and China
- Participate in international promotion of the Blackstone Valley with Discover New England program
- Work with BrandUSA on the international tourism promotion opportunities
- Support the United Nations World Tourism Organization on their sustainable tourism initiatives
- Work with the Consul General of Japan in Boston on Japan/US programs
- Work with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Boston on Taiwan/US programs
- Work with the RI Chinese Community on the development of China/US programs

Front-line Visitor Services

- Continue management of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
- Continue to coordinate the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Visitor Services at the Blackstone River State Park
- Implement hospitality training to all personnel and volunteers
- Expand volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Work to secure continued operations of the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket

Geotourism Planning

- Work with all Blackstone Valley Communities and East Providence on a Geo-tourism development planning

Legislative Actions

- Collaborate with tourism districts to maintain current or a better form of tourism district management that supports local community input in decision-making
- Continue sing private funds to contract a government affairs agent to assist in matters relating to state legislative affairs
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a Southern New England Congressional Tourism Caucus

Headquarter Operations

- Continue to upgrade office technology
- Install full technology at the Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Prepare to move from the BVTC Headquarters to Central Falls Landing

Organizational Improvements

- Update Blackstone Valley Strategic Plan