



## 2016 Work Initiatives

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 with 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, 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 and attractions to leverage visitor spending and the Valley's attractiveness.

## Ongoing Programs and Projects

- Partner with Mystic Aquarium on the educational tours on the Blackstone Valley Explorer
- Operate the Educational Vessel *Blackstone Valley Explorer* from locations in Central Falls, Pawtucket, East Providence, and Woonsocket
- Assist in the development of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park
- Operate the Blackstone Valley Scenic Railway Train Excursion
- Operate the POLAR EXPRESS Train Ride from One Depot Sq, Woonsocket
- Celebrate United Nations World Tourism Day
- 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
- Continue to build the Blackstone Valley Tourism Network
- Further Develop the Hachiko Monument activities in Woonsocket
- 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 Pawtucket Arts Festival
- Manage the Annual Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament at Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville

- 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
- Present the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony
- Develop the Blackstone Valley Canoe and Bicycle Trail programs
- Support tourism development and planning for all Blackstone Valley communities
- Complete the Chocolate Mill Gateway Plan
- 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 *Blackstone Valley Explorer*
- Continue to work with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor with required Non-Governmental-Organization assisted projects
- Work with City of Central Falls to complete the Central Falls Landing Project
- Continue to work with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and local communities in the design and construction of the Pawtucket and

North Smithfield Landings to complete the Blackstone River and Canal Navigation and Transportation System

- Continue work to build Keep Blackstone Valley Beautiful, our local Keep America Beautiful affiliate
- Coordinate community improvement events throughout Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Smithfield and Woonsocket as part of Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup
- Continue to work with the Cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket and the Town of Cumberland in managing the Broad Street Regeneration program
- Continue working with the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Visitor Information Distribution Services
- 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 group tour development for operators interested in visiting Blackstone Valley
- Work with the Providence and Worcester Railroad to encourage wheelchair accessibility aboard the Blackstone Valley Railroad tours

- Work, in conjunction with the State of Rhode Island and the regional tourism district managers, to promote Rhode Island as a tourism destination
- Work, in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, to promote Blackstone Valley as a destination
- Work to produce an official Blackstone Valley Visitor Guide
- Evaluate and enrich the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council managed websites
- Augment the Blackstone Valley on-line shop
- Continue building the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Festival
- Continue to support the Rhode Island State Society
- 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

## **New Projects and Programs**

- Continue to collaborate with Mystic Aquarium on the development of programs on the Blackstone Valley Explorer
- 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 in collaboration with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
- Develop a "Doors Open" Rhode Island event
- 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
- Develop the Blackstone Valley Cultural Heritage Trail
- 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 long-term debt-reduction program
- Develop a Blackstone Valley "Eco-lab Discovery" Program and other educational programs to include the vital river ecosystem and river history

- Continue in the planting of Cherry Tree Project in Central Falls and Pawtucket
- Expand the Blackstone Valley Leisurely Cycle Tours

## **International Efforts in Promotion**

- Continue international development of tourism partnerships with Canada, England, Taiwan, Japan, and China
- Participate in international promotion of the Blackstone Valley with Discover New England program
- Work with BrandUSA on the international tourism promotion opportunities
- Expand Group Tourism efforts overseas
- 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 Desk at the Blackstone River State Park
- Work with the City of Pawtucket to assist in financial issues relating to the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Pawtucket
- Implement hospitality training to all personnel and volunteers
- Expand volunteer support at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in Lincoln

## **Geotourism Planning**

- Work with all Blackstone Valley Communities and East Providence on Geotourism development planning

## **Legislative Actions**

- Collaborate with tourism districts to maintain the current (or potentially better) form of tourism district management that supports local community input in decision-making



- Using private funds, 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
- Upgrade Telecommunications system
- Install full technology at the Visitor Center in Lincoln
- Prepare to move from the Pawtucket Headquarters